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MEMOIRS

OF THE

Princesse de Ligne

LA PRINCESSE HÉLÈNE DE LIGNE

Imp. Chardon & Sormani.

MEMOIRS

OF THE

Princesse de Ligne

EDITED BY

LUCIEN PEREY

TRANSLATED BY LAURA ENSOR

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION

The prominent position assumed by women during the eighteenth century has always been considered a characteristic trait of that period. We do not here refer to the intrigues or friendships of the younger women. We allude rather to the influence of women of a certain age, who, as mothers and advisers, formed so powerful an element in society.

The Vicomte de Ségur, in his book upon women, gives us a vivid description of the manner in which this feminine influence made itself felt: "Society," he says, "was at that time divided into three classes: the young women, women of a certain age, and

those elderly ladies who, receiving every consideration and respect, were regarded as the upholders of established principles, and, in a great measure, the sole arbitrators of taste, tone, and fashion. A young man coming out in society was said to make his 'debût' or 'first appearance.' He was bound to succeed or fail; that is to say, he had to please or displease these three classes of women, whose sentence determined his reputation, his position at Court, his place and rank, and who nearly always made up an excellent match for him."

All education, therefore, tended towards the attainment of this favourable object. The father merely directed a tutor to give his son such general and superficial instruction as might inspire the child with a possible taste for some branch of learning later on. But the mother alone imparted to her son that polish, grace, and amiability which she

herself possessed, and to which she knew so much importance was attached. Her self-love and her maternal affection were equally involved. "If a young man," M. de Ségur again writes, "had been wanting in proper attention towards a lady, or a man older than himself, his mother was sure to be informed of it by her friends the same evening, and the next day the giddy young fellow was certain to be reprimanded!" From this system arose that delicate politeness, that exquisite good taste and moderation in speech, whether discussing or jesting, which constituted the manners of what was termed "Good Society" (*La bonne compagnie*).

The first question we naturally ask ourselves is: What was the training that so well prepared young girls, when married, to take such a leading part in society? Where had they learnt that consummate art of good taste and tone, that facility of conversation,

which enabled them to glance at the lightest subjects, or discuss the most serious topics, with an ease and grace of which Mesdames de Luxembourg, de Boufflers, de Sabran, the Duchesse de Choiseul, the Princesse de Beauvau, the Comtesse de Ségur, and many others, give us such perfect examples? This question is the more difficult to solve from the fact that, although the mothers were much occupied with the education of their sons, we do not find that they concerned themselves in the same degree with that of their daughters. The reason is very simple. At this epoch young girls, especially those of the nobility, were never brought up at home, but were sent to a Convent at five or six years of age. They only left it to marry, and the mother's influence was entirely absent, or came but late into play. What was, therefore, the conventual education which produced such brilliant results? We

believe we have found an interesting answer to this question in the *Memoirs* of the young Princesse Massalska, which are contained in the first part of this work. They show us, without reserve, the strong and the weak points of the training given to girls of good family, future great ladies,—a training which enabled them to play their part on a stage where success awaited them, but whose brilliant scene was so soon to disappear in the storm that was already threatening the political horizon.

It is evident, however, that although this system fulfilled its purpose, it could not entirely replace home education. But where did family life exist in the eighteenth century? Perhaps in the middle classes; but even that is not certain—for they strove to imitate the upper classes; and under the conditions which prevailed at that time amongst the nobility, family life, such as we understand it, was an impossibility.

All gentlemen of good name held an office at Court, or a rank in the army, and consequently lived very little at home. A great many of the female members of the family were attached to the service of the Queen or the Princesses by duties which required their presence at Versailles, and took up half their time. The other half was employed either in paying their court, or in cultivating those accomplishments which were considered so important. They had also to read up the new books, about which they would have to converse in the evening; and as dressing, especially hair-dressing, took up most of the morning, they generally employed in reading the time which the hairdresser devoted to the construction of those wonderful edifices which ladies then carried about on their heads.

All the great houses received daily twenty to twenty-five people to dinner, and the con-

versation was hardly of a nature to admit of the presence of young girls. The dinner hour was at one o'clock, they separated at three, and at five went to the theatre, whenever their duties did not summon them to Versailles; after which they returned home, bringing with them as many friends as possible. What time could have been devoted to the children in a day so fully occupied? The mothers felt this, and by placing their daughters in a convent did the best they could for them. But we shall see, by the life of the young Princess herself, how incomplete was an education thus carried on by women, themselves utterly ignorant of the world, and therefore unfit to prepare their pupils for the temptations that there awaited them.

These *Memoirs*, begun by a child of nine years old and continued till she was fourteen, commence with her entry into the Convent and end on the eve of her marriage. They

were not intended to be published, and have lain by for over a hundred years in their old cases, from whence, with M. Adolphe Gaiffe's kind permission, we brought them to light, when searching through his splendid libraries at the Château d'Oron and in Paris. There, amongst treasures of the sixteenth century and austere Huguenot authors bound in black shagreen, or dark turkey leather, we found the journals of the little Princesse Massalska, whose bright blue, yellow, and red covers contrasted with those of their sterner neighbours.

Their genuineness is unquestionable. The margins covered with childish caricatures, and scribbled over with her or her companions' jokes, like any schoolboy's book; the old yellow-stained paper, the faded ink, the large handwriting, which gradually improves; the incorrect and careless style of the first chapters, which towards the end becomes

remarkable for its elegance ;—all combine to show us that these *Memoirs* are really the production of a precocious and intelligent child.

The Princess died forty years after having written them, and she only mentions them twice in her correspondence. She simply says that one day at Bel Œil, the residence of the Prince de Ligne, her father-in-law, she read some passages of the *Memoirs* she wrote when she was a little girl, and that her husband was so amused by them that he wanted to print a couple of chapters in his private printing-press. Twenty years later, during a long winter in Poland, she read them to her daughter, the Princesse Sidonie, and was much pleased at finding her childish recollections so ingeniously expressed.

Our researches have enabled us to test the veracity of these *Memoirs*. We found by the records at Geneva how exact is her

account of Mademoiselle de Montmorency's death; and the romantic story of Madame de Choiseul Stainville, as related in the *Mémoires* of Lauzun, in the *Correspondance* of Madame du Deffand, and in the *Mémoires* of Durfort de Cheverny, confirms and explains the narrative of the little Princess, written forty or fifty years before these *Memoirs* were published. She also describes a taking of the veil, of which we have found an official report in the national Archives.[1] After the names of the Abbess and Prioress and other signatures, appears that of the little Princess as one of the witnesses.

Convinced of the exactness of the facts related by Hélène Massalska, it has seemed to us interesting to place before the public this faithful picture of an education in the eighteenth century, with its detailed account of the studies, punishments, rewards, and games

[1] Portfolio H. No. 3837, Abbaye-aux-Bois.

of the Convent, and its descriptions, often satirical, but always witty, of the mistresses and scholars; in fact, the complete life of a young girl in a Convent from 1772 to 1779. We must add that all worldly gossip did not stop at the Convent door, that many echoes invaded the cloisters, and that the little Princess does not fail to notice them. This is not the least curious side of the book.

After reading these interesting pages, we felt regret at parting so abruptly with the little writer; and we have, thanks to the kindness of our friends and correspondents, been able to reconstruct the history of her life.

The Princesse Massalska, later on Princesse de Ligne, though she did not play a prominent part in history, found herself, through her uncle, the Bishop of Wilna, and her father-in-law and husband, the Princes de Ligne, mixed up with many interesting

historical events. Besides which, her own life was a most romantic one. The variety of documents we have gathered together, and the brevity of many of the memoranda, have not permitted us to quote them word for word, as we have done in the case of the letters. We have therefore endeavoured to give them a certain unity of style, and to avoid such sudden transitions as might be distasteful to our readers.

PART I

THE ABBAYE-AUX BOIS

I

Ignace Massalski, Prince and Bishop of Wilna—The Radziwill and the Massalski—The feudal lords in Poland—Civil wars in Poland—The Bishop in exile—His arrival in Paris with his niece—Letters from Madame Geoffrin—Answer of the King Stanislaus-Augustus—The Abbaye-aux-Bois.

On a dull December day, in the year of grace 1771, a coach drew up at the door of the Convent of the Abbaye-aux-Bois, Rue de Sève,[1] and three persons alighted from it—a lady advanced in years, very simply dressed; a man of distinguished appearance, easily recognisable as a foreigner; and a pale and delicate-looking little girl. These persons were no other than the famous Madame Geoffrin; Prince Massalski, Bishop of Wilna;

[1] It was only after the Revolution that the street called *Sève* took the name it now bears of *Rue de Sèvres*.

and his eight years old niece, the little Princesse Hélène.

The Prince-Bishop, implicated in the late Polish revolution, had barely escaped arrest by flight. He was bringing to Paris his niece and his nephew, orphans who had been placed under his guardianship. It will here be necessary to cast a retrospective glance at the series of events which brought this exiled family to Paris.

The Bishop of Wilna was a son of Prince Massalski, Grand General of Lithuania. He attained to the episcopate[1] at an early age, and became possessed of considerable influence. His contemporaries describe him as a learned scholar, erudite, and gifted with a quick and lively intelligence, but at the same time add that he was frivolous and fickle. To excessive timidity he united a disposition prone to meddle with eagerness in every

[1] Prince Ignace Massalski, born 18th July 1729, was consecrated Bishop of Wilna 27th June 1762. His eldest brother, father of the Princesse Hélène, had married a Radziwill.

concern. Hasty in his schemes and irresolute afterwards in their execution, his conduct was often at variance with the principles he professed.

The Bishop was a gambler : he lost in three years more than a hundred thousand ducats, and in spite of the immense territorial possessions of the Massalski was continually in monetary difficulties.

His family was one of the most influential in Lithuania, where two rival houses— the Radziwill and the Massalski — contended for supremacy. The latter supported the Czartoryski faction, assisting them by every means in their power to obtain, with Russia's concurrence, the Polish throne for their nephew, Stanislaus-Augustus. The Radziwill, on the other hand, sworn enemies of the Czartoryski, upheld the ancient traditions of the Polish Republic, proving themselves more than hostile to Russian influence and to the nomination of Stanislaus-Augustus.

The Polish feudal lords exercised in their respective provinces the authority of sovereigns ;[1] their chamberlains, masters of hounds, and equerries could compare with Crown officials. They possessed body-guards of dragoons, cossacks, and infantry, and often a considerable militia, of which the officers equalled in rank those of the royal forces.[2]

It is evident that the nobles, although weakened by formidable factions, could dispose of a power with which the king had to reckon. They enjoyed all feudal privileges, and, heedless of the authority of the Crown, were unwilling to yield up any of their prerogatives, each one being determined to

[1] In order to form a correct idea of the lives of the great feudal lords in Poland, refer to the accounts given by Onken in *Le Siècle de Frédéric le Grand ;* by Rulhières in *Les Révolutions de Pologne ;* and by Hermann in *Geschichte des russ Staats*, vol. vi. p. 110.

[2] The Bishop of Wilna paid out of his private purse the entire cost of the 16,000 men forming the Massalski legion. At precisely the same period Comte Potocki, Palatine of Kiowie, was obliged to disband the 25,000 soldiers who had been kept on war footing for a considerable time past by his family. Prince Radziwill (uncle of the little Princesse Hélène) had a revenue of ten millions, and maintained in his cities and castles a regular army of 20,000 men.

exercise solely that authority in his own palatinate or *woivodie*, the result being that the lesser *dièles*, called Dietines,[1] which preceded the election of a king or of a grand *dièle*, usually ended in a sanguinary conflict. At the critical moment, when the Dietines met for the election of Stanislaus-Augustus, the Massalski most opportunely distributed large sums of money; sent their troops to surround the Dietines, of which they felt least assured, and, thanks to these extremely efficacious electoral proceedings, none of the members proposed by the Radziwill were nominated. On hearing this result, Prince Radziwill hurriedly left his castle, or rather fortress, and hastened to Wilna, escorted by the two hundred noblemen who formed his usual retinue, and who were the terror of the

[1] It was in the assemblies called "Dietines" that the representatives to the general *dièle* were chosen, and also those judges who, during the interregnum necessarily existing between the end of one reign and the election of the next king, were empowered to hold courts of justice. These courts, termed tribunals of mourning, were all-powerful during the interregnum. Hence the immense importance the great families attached to supremacy in the Dietines.

country. He broke into the episcopal palace, drove out the judges appointed by the Dietines and, violently apostrophising the prelate, he ran over rapidly the names of the former bishops whom the princes had put to death for interfering in public affairs, ending with these words: "Next time you are subjected to the same temptation, remember that I have a hundred thousand ducats in reserve with which to obtain my absolution at Rome." [1]

The Bishop was at first dismayed by Radziwill's insolent threats, and allowed him to depart without opposition, but, suddenly recovering his presence of mind, he sounded the alarm bell, armed the people, recalled the judges, barricaded the episcopal palace and cathedral, and drove Radziwill out of Wilna. This incident affords a striking illustration of the violence commonly perpetrated in Poland at that time.

[1] For a more detailed account see Rulhières *Révolutions de Pologne.*

The Prince-Bishop having so warmly supported the election of Stanislaus-Augùstus, it was natural to expect that he would continue to uphold the authority of the King. Such, however, was not the case.

The treaty of peace signed at Warsaw in 1768 between Russia and Poland had given great offence to the heads of the Catholic clergy, for it granted to the Polish dissidents, to the Greek community, to the Lutherans and Calvinists, the same rights which had till then been the exclusive privilege of the Roman Catholic Church.[1] Most of the bishops refused to submit to these new terms. The share which Polish dissidents might now claim in public affairs, the appointments to which they might now aspire, combined to exasperate the nobility. Armed confederations

[1] The Confederation of Bar had been proclaimed for the first time in 1768, the principal leaders being Putawski, Krasenski, the Bishop of Wilna, and his father the Grand General of Lithuania. With it began the civil wars of Poland. Louis XV. and the Sultan secretly supported the Polish patriots, but the downfall of the Duc de Choiseul and the defeat of the Turks led to the dispersion of the confederates. The Confederation was reorganised in 1771.

were organised on all sides, and entered into conflict with the Court party, and with the Russians, whose troops, under pretext of upholding the King's authority, occupied in Poland numerous forts, and perpetrated inconceivable outrages. Bishop Massalski was one of the principal promoters of the most famous of these associations—that of the Confederation of Bar. His father, the Grand General of Lithuania, had just died, and Count Oginski had succeeded him in that important command. The Bishop found no difficulty in gaining him over to the new confederation.[1]

On the 20th of September, Oginski had already attacked and defeated the Russians, captured half a regiment and massacred the other half, but shortly after fortune deserted his cause. Overcome by numbers, and, it is said, by treachery, he

[1] Possessed of immense estates in Lithuania, Oginski had married the daughter of Prince Michel Czartoryski; he was therefore first cousin of the King Stanislaus-Augustus, but they had been rivals from their earliest childhood, and were jealous of each other.

fled with difficulty to Königsberg amidst a thousand dangers.

His defeat was the signal for the disbanding of the confederates. The Prince-Bishop had left Warsaw for Wilna early in June to assist Oginski with his powerful influence, but hearing of the victory of the Russians and their advance on Wilna, he secretly left in great haste for France, taking with him his nephew, Prince Xavier, and his niece, the little Princesse Hélène, who had been confided to his care. The two children, careless of events, allowed themselves to be hurried away by their uncle, only too happy to leave a country where they saw nothing but fierce-looking soldiers, "whose appearance alone frightened them."

The Prince had no sooner crossed the Polish frontier than he might have seen the following in the Dutch Gazettes: "Major Soltikoff, at the head of the Russian troops, occupies Wilna, and has sequestrated all the episcopal possessions; the household goods

forming part of these possessions have been at once removed and taken to the *résidence.* As for the Bishop's personal and family property, it will be judicially seized by the *castellan*[1] of Novgorod, and be subject to his administration."[2]

The Bishop's first care on arriving in Paris was to call on Madame Geoffrin, whom he had seen during her recent stay in Poland. He was aware of her influence with the King, and hoped to obtain by this means his recall

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[1] The Polish *castellans*, more especially in Lithuania, were originally invested with the supervision of the castles, from a military as well as from a judicial point of view. Subsequently they only retained their judicial functions, and they formed part of the Senate. They were divided into two classes, of which thirty-three were superior *castellans* and forty-nine inferior *castellans*. They ranked after the *woivodes* or palatines.

[2] Prince Radziwill, the Bishop's old enemy, was exiled at the same time, his possessions being confiscated for the benefit of the Russians. It would almost appear as if his ancestors had foreseen the misfortunes which might befall their descendants, for they had placed in their church at Diewick statues of solid gold, each a foot and a half in height, representing the twelve apostles. When the war broke out Prince Charles had the twelve apostles conveyed to Munich, and by melting them down was able not only to live there for many years, but was also enabled to extend the most liberal hospitality towards many of his fellow-exiles.

from exile as well as the removal of the decree sequestrating his property. Madame Geoffrin, notwithstanding her usual discretion and dread of being implicated in the affairs of others, took the Bishop under her protection, and wrote to the King as follows :[1]—

17th November 1771.

"The Bishop of Wilna is in Paris, where he intends making some stay. He has brought me two children, his niece and his nephew, and has begged me to take them under my care. I have placed the girl in a convent, and sent the boy to college."

It is apparent that Madame Geoffrin, according to her usual discretion, does not compromise herself in this first reference to the Bishop; she merely acquaints the King with the fact that she has seen the Bishop, and then waits to know how he will receive the information. The King appears to have

[1] See *Correspondance du Roi Stanislaus-Augustus avec Madame Geoffrin*, published and edited by M. Charles de Mouy.

shown no displeasure, for she writes again, and this time more boldly :—

13th January 1772.

"I implore your Majesty to write a few words of kindness to the unfortunate Bishop of Wilna ; he is a child, but a foolish child, devoted to your person. I can assure you that he cannot be reproached with a single step he has taken since his arrival in Paris. He is the only Pole I receive, and he fears me like fire ; truly I have forbidden his talking about Polish affairs with any of his countrymen, and I feel certain of his obedience. He has two servants I have procured for him. The Abbé Bandeau and Colonel Saint Leu form part of his household."

It was not only in order to receive a few words of kindly notice from the King that the Bishop made use of Madame Geoffrin's influence. The chief object in view was to obtain the removal of the decree of sequestration under which his lands had been placed.

The King understood the case, but was unfavourably disposed towards the Prince, whose fidelity he doubted. Nevertheless he wrote to Madame Geoffrin: "My last letter to you enclosed one for the Bishop of Wilna, written in accordance with the request contained in your letter of 13th January. To what I then wrote both to you and to him, I can only here now add that I see by a letter of his to the Abbé Siestrzencewiez he is under the impression that I requested the Russians to sequestrate his property. Nothing is more untrue; neither his estates nor those of any other persons have been seized at my command. On the contrary, I gave myself considerable trouble in order to protect them. But, once for all, remember the fable of the horse that was jealous of the stag without knowing why. How, in order to subdue him, he appealed to man, lent him his back, and accepted the bridle. When, thus combined, they had overcome the stag, the horse tried to shake off his rider. The

latter, however, kept his seat, and vigorously spurring him, compelled the animal to submit to his mastery. The simile is apparent. The Poles often feel the spur of the Russian horseman, whose assistance they have invoked against their king or against one of their equals.

"The Bishop of Wilna is perfectly aware against whom he wished the Russians to intrigue. He has been punished according to his deserts; but again I repeat, it is not I who have drawn down upon him this punishment. On the contrary, I have striven to lighten it, by obtaining that part of his revenues should be left him, and the fact that my ministers, two of whom are my near relatives, have for a year past had their lands sequestered, is the best proof that I do not command these Russian executions. However, you may again assure the Bishop from me that the moment I see an opportunity of assisting him I will do so."

The Prince-Bishop appeared satisfied with

the King's promise, and, expressing his extreme gratitude to Madame Geoffrin, settled in Paris as though he intended making it his permanent abode. He then proceeded to place his nephew and niece in the best educational establishments it was possible to find. We have already seen that he chose the Abbaye-aux-Bois for the young Princess.

Two convents competed at that time for the privilege of educating the daughters of the nobility, Penthemont and the Abbaye-aux-Bois. St. Cyr was no longer the fashion, and, moreover, founded by Madame de Maintenon for the gratuitous education of noble but poor girls, it was restricted to a very limited sphere. The two convents we have just mentioned were, on the contrary, intended only for the education of the daughters of the richest and highest families.[1]

The Abbaye-aux-Bois had been founded by

[1] Even the princesses of royal blood conformed to this usage; the Duchesse de Bourbon née Princesse d'Orleans was educated at Penthemont.

Jean de Nesle and his wife Anne d'Entragues, in the diocese of Noyon, under the reign of Louis le Gros, and belonged to the order of Cîteaux.[1] In the year 1654 the Abbess and nuns of the Abbaye-aux-Bois had been reduced to flight in consequence of the disturbances and devastations that had laid waste the county of Soissonnais. They found shelter in Paris, and there bought the convent of *Dix Vertus*, situated in the Rue de Sève, which had just been vacated by the nuns of the order of the Annunciation of Bourges.

The Cistercian nuns[2] obtained from the

[1] Cîteaux, a celebrated monastery situated in the diocese of Châlon-sur-Saône, five miles from Dijon, was founded in 1098 by Saint Robert. The rules of Cîteaux were drawn up in 1107. The Abbeys of La Ferté, of Pontigny, of Clairvaux, and of Morimond were termed the four daughters of Cîteaux. Saint Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, gave his name to the monks of Cîteaux, now called Bernardines.

[2] The Cistercian nuns are as ancient an order as the monks. Saint Hourbelle, mother of Saint Bernard, and several other ladies of rank, adopted the order of Cîteaux, and were celebrated for their virtue and austerity. But they did not long retain the favour of their early piety. They acquired great wealth and, as the annals of the convent state, "their iniquity sprouted up from their fatness and their obesity." They possessed numerous convents under the name of "Bernardines."

Pope the transfer of the deeds and possessions of the Abbaye-aux-Bois, which the King ratified by letters-patent, August 1667. On the 8th June 1718, Madame, widow of Philip of France, brother of Louis XIV., laid the first stone of the Church of Notre-Dame-aux-Bois,[1] little anticipating that at a later period her own grand-daughter, Louise-Adelaide d'Orleans, would become Abbess of that same convent.

At the time of which we write the Abbaye-aux-Bois was ruled by Madame Marie Madeleine de Chabrillan, who had succeeded Madame de Richelieu, sister of the famous Maréchal. All the ladies entrusted with the education of the scholars belonged to the highest nobility; the pupils themselves bore the noblest names in the kingdom, and, strangely enough, their education combined

[1] In this stone was enchased a large gold medal, given by H.R.H. Madame, on which was engraved in bas-relief the effigy of the Princess. On the reverse she was represented seated on two lions, holding in her right hand a medallion with the design of the church. Round this medal was inscribed the following legend: "*Diis genita et genetrix Deum.*"

the most practical and homely domestic duties, with instructions best suited to mould them for polished and courtly society.

Music, dancing, and painting were taught with the greatest care. The Abbey possessed a fine theatre well provided with scenery and costumes, which, in point of elegance, left nothing to be desired.

Moli and Larive taught elocution and the art of reading aloud, the ballets were directed by Noverre, Philippe, and Dauberval, first dancers at the opera. The professors were all chosen beyond the precincts of the Abbey, the instructors in botany and natural history alone being an exception to this rule. The ladies merely superintended the studies of their scholars, and were present during the lessons.

They, however, took a much more active share in the domestic education imparted to the young girls after their *first communion.*

This we shall see later on.

II

The *Memoirs* of Hélène Massalska—Her entry at the Abbaye-aux-Bois—The dormitory—Illness of Hélène—Sister Bichon and paradise—*La Grise* and Mother Quatre Temps's punishments—The order of truth—Wars of the "blues" and the "reds"—The Comte de Beaumanoir's scullion—Madame de Rochechouart.

But it is time to let the little Princess describe in her own ingenuous and charming language the details of her admission to the Abbaye-aux-Bois. She pompously heads her copy-book with the following title, which we reproduce as it stands in the original.[1]

Memoirs of Apolline-Hélène Massalska in the Royale Abbaye de Notre-Dame-aux-Bois, rue de Sève, Faubourg Saint Germain.

"I was received on a Thursday at the

[1] Hélène began her *Memoirs* in 1773; she was then ten years old.

Abbaye-aux-Bois. Madame Geoffrin, my uncle's friend, took me first to the Abbess's parlour, which is very handsome, for it is painted white with gold stripes. Madame de Rochechouart came to the parlour also, and also Mother Quatre Temps, for she is the head-mistress of the youngest class, to which I am to belong.

"They were kind enough to say I had a pretty face and a good figure and beautiful hair. I made no reply, having quite forgotten my French on the way, for I had been such a long journey that I had passed through I do not know how many towns, and always by coach, the driver blowing his horn all the time. I understood, however, all that was said. They then told me they were going to take me away to put on the scholar's dress, and that then they would bring me back to the grating for Madame Geoffrin to see me. They therefore opened the wicket of the parlour grating and passed me through it, as I was so small. They brought me to a room

belonging to the Lady Abbess, all hung in blue and white damask, and sister Crinore put me on the dress, but when I saw that it was black I cried so very hard, it was quite piteous to see me ; but when they added the blue ribbons I was a little comforted, and then the head-mistress brought some preserves which I ate, and I was told we should be given some every day. I was petted a good deal, and the elder of the young ladies on service at the *abbatial*[1] came to look at me, and I heard them say : ' Poor little child, she does not speak French ; we must make her speak Polish, to see what kind of a language it is.' But I, knowing they would laugh at me, did not choose to speak. They said I was very delicate, and then said that I came from a very distant country, from Poland, adding : ' Ah, how comical to be a Pole !'

" However, Mademoiselle de Montmorency took me on her knee and asked if she should

[1] The private apartments of the Lady Abbess are so called.

be my little mother, and I answered by a nod, for I was quite determined only to speak when I could speak like everybody else. I was asked if I thought the young lady holding me pretty, so I put my hand to my eyes to show that I thought hers were beautiful, and then they amused themselves in trying to make me say her name—'Montmorency.'

"However, I was told that my uncle had come to the parlour and wished to see me in uniform. I therefore went, dressed as I was, and it was thought that it suited me very well, and after having well recommended me to the ladies, my uncle and Madame Geoffrin left. Then the Lady Abbess and Madame de Rochechouart tried to make me converse, but found it quite impossible, so that Madame de Rochechouart called to Mademoiselle de Montmorency and said: 'Dear heart, I recommend this child to your care; she is a little foreigner, knowing hardly any French; you have a kind heart, take her to the school, and see that she is not teased; it will be easy

for you to have her well received.' But when it came to giving my name Madame de Rochechouart never could remember it; I repeated it, but seeing that it was thought ridiculous I proposed it should not in future be mentioned; then Madame de Rochechouart asked me if I had not a Christian name. I said 'Hélène;' so Mademoiselle de Montmorency said she would introduce me under the name of Hélène.

"We started off. It was the recreation time. Mademoiselle de Narbonne, who had seen me at the *abbatial*, had already announced me. She had said I was a 'little wild' thing, who had not chosen to open her lips; but that I was very graceful.' As it was raining that day the recreation was taking place in All Souls' cloisters. As soon as I arrived they all came towards us. Mademoiselle de Montmorency brought me to the teachers, who made a great deal of me, and the class surrounded me, asking all sorts of queer questions, to which I did not reply,

so that some of them thought I was dumb.

"Mademoiselle de Montmorency asked the head-mistress of the blue class to be allowed to show me over all the departments in the Convent. Mother Quatre Temps consented. Then she took me through the whole house, and gave me a good collation. All the nuns and scholars of the red class petted me extremely. They gave me pin-cushions, *soufflets*,[1] *grimaces*,[2] and I was very happy.

"At supper-time Mademoiselle de Montmorency brought me back to the classroom, and Mother Quatre Temps led me by the hand to the refectory. I was given a seat next to Mademoiselle de Choiseul, who was the last arrival. During supper Mademoiselle de Choiseul talked to me, and I risked a few words in answer, so that she called out: 'The little Pole speaks French.' After

[1] Small pin-cushions in the shape of bellows.

[2] A thick round box with pin-cushion top.

supper I became quite intimate with Mademoiselle de Choiseul, who was very pretty. She told me that, when in the evening our names were called over, I must ask Madame de Rochechouart for a holiday, and give a collation, and that she would do the speaking. Then we played at many games—the massacre of the innocents, and a thousand other things. When it was bed-time we went to the nuns' dormitory. Madame de Rochechouart read the roll-call; I was called last. I came forward with Mademoiselle de Choiseul, who in my name begged for a holiday. Madame de Rochechouart inquired from Mother Quatre Temps if my uncle had been informed of what was necessary to pay for 'the welcome,' as it was called, for it cost twenty-five *louis*[1] to give a grand collation to all the pupils, and ices were absolutely necessary. Mother Quatre Temps said Yes; so the following Saturday was chosen for the holiday."

It is easy to see by this opening scene

[1] Twenty pounds.

that the little Pole would soon get accustomed to her new life.

The blue class into which Hélène was entered was composed of children from seven to ten years old.[1] It is interesting to note, from the very first, what was the order of the lessons, the working and recreation hours. Hélène gives it in her own writing: "Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays: to get up in summer at seven o'clock, in winter at half-past seven. To be at eight in the stalls of the schoolroom, ready for Madame de Rochechouart, who comes in at eight. Directly she has left, to learn the *Catéchisme de Montpellier*,[2] and repeat it. At nine o'clock, breakfast; and half-past nine, Mass; at ten, reading till eleven. From eleven till half-past eleven, a music lesson. At half-

[1] Children from five to seven years of age did not attend school; but there was a considerable number of them at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, under the care of the younger nuns.

[2] The *Catéchisme de Montpellier* was a Jansenist catechism; its doctrines were openly proclaimed by the ladies of the Abbaye-aux-Bois.

past eleven till twelve, drawing lesson. From twelve to one, a lesson in geography and history. At one o'clock, dinner and recreation till three. At three o'clock, lessons in writing and arithmetic till four. At four o'clock, dancing lesson till five. Collation and recreation till six; from six to seven, the harp or the harpsichord. At seven, supper. At half-past nine, the dormitory."

The alternate days were arranged in the same manner, but instead of receiving lessons from masters unconnected with the Convent, the children studied under the superintendence of the ladies of the Abbey. On Sundays and holy-days (these latter being very numerous) the classes met at eight o'clock, the Gospel was read, and then all went to Mass at nine. At eleven the young girls attended a short lesson given by the directors, and at four o'clock went to Vespers.

Hélène has not omitted to portray the mistresses of the blue class, and has sketched them with irreverent precision: "Madame

de Montluc, called Mother Quatre Temps, kind, gentle, careful, too minute, and a busy-body.

"Madame de Montbourcher, called Sainte Macaire, kind, stupid, very ugly, believing in ghosts.

"Madame de Fresnes, called Sainte Bathilde, ugly and kind; tells us many stories."

Fifteen lay sisters performed the service of the blue class.

Though Hélène belonged to the youngest class, she had been temporarily placed in the dormitory of the elder girls—a source of great displeasure to them, as we shall soon see.

"About this time I began to fall ill, from the effects of the Paris water. Monsieur Portal[1] ordered me some powders, and when

[1] Baron Antoine Portal, consulting physician to Louis XV. and the successive sovereigns until Charles X., was Professor of Anatomy at the Museum, President of the Academy of Medicine, and a friend of Buffon and Franklin. His long career was devoted to remarkable works. By command of the Academy of Sciences he drew up a report in 1774, on the effects of noxious fumes, amongst others, of coal, on man. This small work was reprinted several times,

I was in bed, Madame de Sainte Bathilde, the third mistress of the blue class, used to come with a lay sister in order to make me take them. On one occasion she forgot to give them to me; and on that day the elder girls were going to eat a pasty, and when the door was locked they got up and began to eat by the glimmer of a street lamp. When I saw they were eating I said I wanted some, and that if they did not give me any I should tell. Upon which Mademoiselle d'Equilly brought me a large piece of pie and crust, which I devoured. But Madame de Sainte Bathilde remembered that she had not given me my powder, and got out of bed and brought it me. No sooner did the young ladies hear the key in the lock than they all ran to their beds, and one of them put all the fragments of the pasty into her bed. Then the mistress and Sister Eloi came to

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and translated into four languages at the expense of the Academy; although the least important, it is best known of all his works. He died in 1832, aged eighty-seven.

my side to give me my powder. As I did not dare to say anything for fear of betraying the girls, I was obliged to swallow the powder, having just eaten a large piece of pie crust.

"When Madame de Sainte Bathilde was gone the girls got up again; they grumbled at me, saying it was insupportable to have a tiresome brat like myself in their room, and then they set to and drank some cider. I called out again for some to be given me, but they would not, because I had just taken a powder, and even Mademoiselle de la Roche Aymon came and slapped me, but I cried so much that at last they were obliged to give me a glass of cider, which I drank off at one draught. Next morning I had violent fever, and was carried to the infirmary. In the night I was delirious, and a putrid fever came on. I was at death's door, and remained two months at the infirmary."

After this fine freak the health of the little Princess was considered too delicate for her to undergo the usual education. It

was therefore decided to give her separate rooms, a nurse, a maid, and a *mie* (a nursery-maid), her uncle having written to authorise in advance all necessary expenses.

"My nurse," she continues, "was called Bathilde Toutevoix, and soon idolised me. I was given a very fine apartment, allowed four *louis*[1] a month for my pocket money, and nothing was denied me for my keep and my masters. Mr. Tourton, my banker, received an order from my uncle to supply me up to the sum of thirty thousand livres[2] a year if necessary.

"About that time my nurse became very cross with me. We had a cat that was very fond of my nurse, and even of me, for whatever I did to it it never scratched me, though I often put it sufficiently out of temper to make it growl like a mad thing. This cat

[1] About three pounds.

[2] Twelve hundred pounds. We must not lose sight of the fact that at the Abbaye-aux-Bois the education was exclusively devoted to forming future "great ladies," and differed entirely from that of the middle class.

was called *La Grise*. Once Mademoiselle de Choiseul and myself were eating some walnuts at the end of the passage leading to the older part of the building; we had seated ourselves on some steps there, when unfortunately *La Grise* passed by. I called it and it came to us, and while stroking it the idea came into our heads to fasten the nutshells on its paws. Mademoiselle de Choiseul had some ribbon in her netting box, so we carried out our plan, and *La Grise* was so funny, for it could not stand up. We laughed so loud that my nurse and Madame de Sainte Monique heard us from my room; they came downstairs and found *La Grise* in this condition. My nurse nearly cried; she scolded me very much and sent me to the schoolroom. But that was not all. *La Grise* always slept at the foot of my bed, because my nurse thought it would keep me warm. That evening, when my nurse had gone to bed, being cross with *La Grise* for having got me into disgrace I began kick-

ing it so much that it got off my bed. Then it went to lie down in the fireplace. After a few minutes I put my head out of my curtains to see what it was about, but when I saw its two eyes glistening in the fireplace I was frightened, and thought that if I awoke in the night and saw those eyes I should not know what they were. So I got out of bed, took it up, and not knowing where to put it, gently opened the press and shut it up inside.

"Then the poor *Grise* began to mew and moan so loud that my nurse got up, not knowing what it could be. She looked about everywhere, and at last discovered *La Grise* in the press. I was so silly that I maintained I had not put the cat there, and that apparently it had got in by itself.

"My nurse said as that was the way I hated *La Grise*, she would give it away the very next day; then I cried so much and screamed so loud that Mademoiselle de Choiseul, Mesdemoiselles de Conflans, my

maid, and their maids ran into the room, not knowing what could have happened. I told them I was the most unhappy person in the world, that my nurse wanted to give away *La Grise*, that I could not live without it, that I would have *La Grise*, it must be given me at once, and I would beg its pardon.

"I had no rest till *La Grise* was put on my bed; I took it in my arms, I embraced it, I kissed its paws, and promised it I would never do so again. Then my nurse said she consented to keep *La Grise*, but that I should have nothing but dry bread for breakfast next day. I was only too happy to be let off so easily; they all went back to their rooms and I slept quietly the remainder of the night."

Soon after, Hélène was brought to the Confessional for the first time. Though only eight years old, she followed the religious instructions for some days, and Dom Thémines, the pupils' director, enjoined on her a religious retreat to meditate on obedience; a very good subject for a mischievous child.

After the retreat she confessed, but unfortunately has left us no record of her confession; she came back rather tired, but satisfied with her day's work, and thinking herself quite a grown up person. She continues her narrative with charming ingenuousness.

"In the evening Sister Bichon came to see my nurse, and while Mademoiselle Gioul, my maid, was undressing me, Sister Bichon begged me to remember her in my prayers (for although I said them with the others in the schoolroom, I was made to repeat them before getting into bed). I said to Sister Bichon: 'What do you wish me to ask God Almighty for you?' She replied: 'Pray to God that He may make my soul as pure as yours is at this moment.' I therefore said out loud, at the end of my prayer: 'My God, grant Sister Bichon that her soul may be as white as mine ought to be at my age if I had profited by the good teaching I have received.' My nurse was delighted at the manner in which I had arranged my prayer,

and kissed me, as did also Sister Bichon, Mademoiselle Gioul, and *mie* Claudine. When I was in bed I asked if it was a sin to pray for *La Grise.* My nurse and Sister Bichon replied Yes, and that I must not speak to God about *La Grise.*

"Then, as I was not sleepy, Sister Bichon came to my bedside, and told me that if I died that night, I should go immediately into paradise; then I asked her what one saw in paradise. She replied: 'You must imagine, my little darling, that paradise is a large room all made of diamonds and rubies and emeralds and other precious stones. God Almighty sits on a throne, Jesus Christ is on His right hand, and the Blessed Virgin on His left; the Holy Ghost is perched on His shoulder, and all the saints pass and repass before Him.' While she was telling me this I fell asleep."

There is always a certain truth and simplicity about the little Princess's narrative which lend it a great charm; she praises or

blames herself with entire good faith, and her character becomes apparent at the end of a few pages. The education in common, and the intelligent management of Madame de Rochechouart, had an excellent influence on this spoilt and wayward child, accustomed to see everything give way before her. But she had to suffer at the beginning, and she relates her first experiences in a most comical manner.

"I had at that time," she says, "a terrible aversion for good handwriting. Monsieur Charme was very much displeased with me, and set me back to write nothing but O's, which bored me very much, and at the same time made the whole class laugh at me: they said I should never be able to sign my own name. It was not that I absolutely hated writing; on the contrary, I spent the whole day writing my *Memoirs*, as was the fashion amongst the elder young ladies at that time, and we, the younger class, chose to do the same. I therefore scribbled all day long, but it was such a scrawl that

only I could read it, and, far from benefiting me, it spoilt my hand. Mademoiselle de Choiseul often wrote for me, but, as they perceived it was not my writing, Monsieur Charme complained of me to Mother Quatre Temps. She asked me : 'Mademoiselle, is it you who have written this?' I answered: 'Yes, Madame, in truth it is I.' She said : 'If it is you, write out at once before me a similar page.' Then I was very much embarrassed, I should have liked to have got into a mouse-hole. What I wrote worst were the M's and N's, and my copy was 'Massinissa, roi de Numidie.' As every one knows, there are a great many tops and tails in that name ; and there they were, all awry, one going one way, the other another ; in short, it was easy to see that I was incapable of making such a copy. Then Mother Quatre Temps fastened donkey's ears on to me, and because I had told falsehoods hung a red tongue, together with my copy, on my back. I began saying that I wrote so badly because the table had

been shaken; I was told that I slandered, and the black tongue was added. The worst of it was that Madame de Rochechouart, who was rather pleased with me, and was beginning to show me much kindness, had told me at the morning class to go to her cell that evening at six. But now the hour was approaching, how could I make my appearance in the state I was in? I would sooner have died. Was I presentable with donkey's ears, two tongues, and a tattered scrawl on my back? So when Mother Quatre Temps told me to go to the *Maîtresse Générale*, I would not leave my place, and I cried enough to make my eyes start out of my head. Mademoiselle de Choiseul was also crying, and all my class pitied me. When Mother Quatre Temps saw I would not obey her, she added into the bargain the order of ignominy, and sent for two lay sisters, Sister Eloi and Sister Bichon, who took me by the arms, dragged me from my stall, and conducted me to the door of Madame de

Rochechouart's cell. When I arrived there I was so wretched that I felt my life was not worth a pin. Directly I entered Madame de Rochechouart called out and said: 'Eh, my heavens, what has happened to you? you look like a merryandrew; what can you have done to deserve being deprived of your human figure?' Then I threw myself at her feet, and told her my faults. I saw she had the greatest difficulty in the world to keep herself from laughing; however, she said in a severe manner: 'Your faults are very great, and your punishment is not great enough.' Then she called in the two sisters who were at the door, and she said: 'I order Mademoiselle to be reconducted to the schoolroom, and to go without dessert for eight days; and tell the head-mistress of the blue class to come and speak to me.' Madame de Rochechouart, moreover, asked if I had met any one on my way to her, and I said I had met the doctor Monsieur Bordeu, and Madame la Duchesse de Chatillon, who had come to see

one of her daughters who was sick. I was brought back to the classroom, but I heard, shortly after, some of the red class young ladies say that Madame de Rochechouart had said it was stupid to make such a guy of me, and that she had soundly rated Mother Quatre Temps, requesting her to punish her scholars without disfiguring them; that a few days before she had entered the schoolroom and thought she must be looking at Egyptian idols, on seeing five or six of us with asses ears and three tongues, and as the Convent was constantly full of strangers, it might throw a ridicule on the education of the pupils. From that time forth these punishments were abolished, and instead we were made to go on our knees in the middle of the choir, we were deprived of dessert, given dry bread at breakfast and collation, or made to copy out the *Privilège du Roi*[1] during playtime, which was very tedious."

[1] *Privilège du Roi*, a preface authorising the publication of a work, granted in the king's name.

Hélène, however, was not at the end of her tribulations, and her quick temper naturally brought her into a few more.

"About that time I experienced from all the class a bodily punishment which I resolved long to remember. I was in the habit of repeating to Madame de Sainte Euphrasie everything that took place in the class, and as I saw it met with success, I listened to all the pupils said, so as to repeat it to her, so much so that all the classes had taken a dislike to me.

"I was at that time nine years of age. I had a quarrel with Mademoiselle de Nagu; she had taken from my drawer the short *Lives of the Saints*, with pictures in it, and was reading it. As I only allowed my most intimate friends to rummage in my drawer, I went to her and told her to return me my book. She said: 'This book amuses me, you do not want to read it just now, I will return it when I have finished it.' I was not satisfied with this answer, and tried to

snatch it away from her; but, as she was stronger than I, she gave me a sound box in the ear; then, instead of giving her one in return, I began to cry, and went and complained to Madame de Saint Pierre, headmistress of the white class, as Nagu belonged to that class. The mistress, seeing me in tears, and my cheek red, called Mademoiselle de Nagu, desired her to return me my book, to ask my pardon, and condemned her to go without dessert at supper. Every one pitied Nagu, the more so that I was not liked. Every one called me tell-tale, and hummed in my ears, 'Tell-tale-tit, go and tell our cat to keep a place for you the day that you die.'

"But that was not all. Mademoiselle de Choiseul and Mesdemoiselles de Conflans, my three friends, were absent; Mademoiselle de Choiseul was being inoculated, the others were in the country, so that I had no one to uphold me. On leaving the refectory it is the custom to run as fast as possible to the schoolroom, the mistresses, meanwhile, re-

maining behind. Instead of remaining with them (for then no one could have touched me), I was silly enough to be one of the first to run. I unluckily found myself next to Nagu, who said: 'Ah, I have caught you,' and at the same moment tripped me up, and threw me down on my face. Then all the young ladies began jumping over my body, so that I received so many kicks that I was bruised all over. The mistresses came to me, and I was picked up, and the young ladies said: 'Mademoiselle, I beg your pardon, I never saw you.' Others said to the mistresses, who scolded them: 'I did not do it on purpose, she was on the ground, I did not see her.' I was sent to bed, and the next day Madame de Rochechouart came to me. I told her my story, and she said: 'If your companions loved you, this would never have happened; you must have great faults of character for all the classes to be against you.' Since that day I have never repeated the least thing to my mistresses, and I became

so amiable that every one loved me, and Nagu also, with whom I became such friends that we would have gone through fire and water for each other.

"But now is the moment to speak of the game that was most in fashion at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. It was the chase; but it required a whole day to carry it out, and it could only be played in the garden. They elected huntsmen and whippers-in; then they chose those who were to be the deer, and marked one stag to lead. The younger class were the hounds; and the red class always went very politely and asked the blue class to take that part in the game. When we were not pleased with the red class we refused; and even sometimes it has happened that, in the middle of the game, the blues would leave and go away, so that the stag could not be run down.

"I had then an adventure for which I revenged myself well. Among the older girls of the red class there was a Made-

moiselle de Sivrac who had a very handsome face, but was subject to spasms, and was rather crazy. We had had our recreation in the garden, and as we were returning to the schoolroom she said to me: 'I have forgotten my gloves at the end of the garden, please come with me to fetch them.' I innocently accompanied her, but when we were behind the lilac bushes she threw herself on me, upset me, seized a branch of lilac and whipped me cruelly. When she had beaten me well she ran away. I picked myself up as best I could, and returned crying to the classroom. I thought: 'If I complain to the mistresses, Mademoiselle de Sivrac will deny the fact; she will say she only gave me a few slaps, and I shall again be thought a tell-tale. What should I do?' I called together all the most determined girls of the blue class, and told them my story, adding that if they did not revenge me the blue class would soon be overpowered by the older pupils; in fact, I stirred up their

feelings as best I could, so that we declared we would have no further intercourse with the red class unless Mademoiselle de Sivrac made me an apology.

"On the first holiday after this the red class wished to play at the chase; they sent to beg the blue class to lend them some girls to act as hounds; but no one would go; and it was the same for all the other games. Then they asked what was the meaning of brats like us being so stuck up.

"In reality they were very annoyed, for the red class is the least numerous; the white class is taken up with preparing for their first communion, so that we were absolutely necessary for any games requiring a large number.

"This was not all; we broke open Mademoiselle de Sivrac's drawer and stall, tore into atoms all her papers, and threw into the well her purse, a pocket-book, and a comfit box that we also found in it. Then the red young ladies told Mesdemoiselles de Choiseul

and de Montsauge, who were the most infuriated because they were my friends, that if they caught them alone they would box their ears.

"From this moment there was the most fearful disorder in the schoolroom. Anything that was found belonging to the red class was thrown into the well, or torn up by the blue class; and whenever the reds could catch the blues they beat them like plaster. At last all this became known to the mistresses, for at every moment the little ones were seen with marks of pinches or scratches, and when asked: 'Who put you in that state?' they replied: 'The red young ladies.' On the other hand, the older girls lost their books, found their copy-books torn and their trinkets broken. The parents of both classes spoke to Madame de Rochechouart, some saying that their daughters were covered with bumps and bruises, the others that their daughters had lost or had all their things torn up. Then Madame de Rochechouart

came to the schoolroom and asked the blues and reds what had given rise to all this hatred. Mademoiselle de Choiseul came forward and related my affair with Mademoiselle de Sivrac.

"Madame de Rochechouart asked her why she had whipped me, and she could give no reason; but without Madame de Rochechouart saying anything more to her, she came up to me, begged my pardon, and kissed me.

"Madame de Rochechouart said that if these quarrels continued the two classes would have to be entirely separated; and she commanded us to kiss each other. From that day peace was re-established, and we no longer willingly hurt each other.

"One day, while running in the garden, we heard a subterranean noise, and looking about to see where it could come from, at last discovered that it issued from a drain-hole which corresponded with the kitchen of the Comte de Beaumanoir, whose mansion was next door. Thereupon several of us

formed a line, to hide what we were doing from the mistresses, while the others began to talk. We heard a little boy's voice; we asked him his name; he said it was 'Jacquot,' and that he had the honour of serving in the Comte de Beaumanoir's kitchen. We told him the recreation hour was ending, but that we should return next day at the same hour.

"The following day he played the flute, and we sang; then, as soon as one of us spoke, he asked her name. He was told it, and in three or four days he knew several by the sound of their voices, and called out: 'Halloo! D'Aumont! Damas! Mortemart!' He inquired if one was fair or dark; and then asked what we were doing in the garden. We told him it was our collation hour, and he replied that if it were not for an iron grating in the middle of the drain he would be able to give us some dainty morsels. So we said he must try and remove the grating, and he promised to do his best.

We were so taken up by our conversation that Madame de Saint Pierre, one of the mistresses, was able to approach us without our noticing it. When we saw her so near, we all ran away, and Jacquot cried out: 'Listen! Choiseul, Damas, the grating shall be taken away to-morrow.'

"Madame de Saint Pierre went directly to Madame de Rochechouart and told her what had happened. Madame de Rochechouart wrote at once to Monsieur de Beaumanoir, that the drain leading from his kitchen was going to be walled up, as his servants talked with the scholars. He immediately replied that he was extremely vexed at what had happened, and that he was going to dismiss all his kitchen servants. Madame de Rochechouart begged he would not do so; the masons were sent for, and the drain walled up that very day. Madame de Rochechouart did not consider it worth while to come down to the schoolroom about such an adventure. On the contrary, she thought

it would be attaching too much importance to it; but in the evening, at the roll-call, she made some jests about the delightful conquest we had made, and added that we must have very refined tastes and noble feelings to have set such store by a scullion's conversation; and, that as for those who had given him their names, she trusted he would at some future time take advantage of their former kindness, which would naturally be very pleasant for their families. In this way she humbled without scolding us."

Madame de Rochechouart, a woman of sound judgment and noble mind, soon became very tenderly attached to the little Pole. The child, almost abandoned, so far from her own country, inspired her with real interest. Each day she had her brought to her cell, and without the child being aware of it, watched her carefully. Hélène, who was like a wild colt, felt a respect and at the same time a sort of fear mingled with the greatest admiration for the *Grande Maîtresse*

Générale. She constantly mentions her in her *Memoirs.*

Madame de Rochechouart, sister of the late Duc de Mortemart, was twenty-seven years of age: "Tall, a handsome figure, a pretty foot, hands delicate and white, splendid teeth, large black eyes, a proud and grave look, and a betwitching smile." Such is the portrait the little Princess has left us of her. She was undoubtedly, after the Lady Abbess, the most important person in the Abbey, and directed as she chose the studies and education of the pupils. It was thus that she filled up the often tedious hours of a life and calling she had not chosen. Madame de Rochechouart had two sisters who were beautiful and witty, like all the Mortemarts. All three went through their novitiate when hardly fifteen years old; for, according to the cruel custom of those times, their fortunes went entirely to the inheritor of the family name. They pronounced their vows three years after.

"I stood in great fear of Madame de Rochechouart in those days," says Hélène. "When she came to the classroom in the morning and went the rounds, if by chance she spoke to me, I immediately became embarrassed and had trouble to collect myself sufficiently to reply. Indeed, it may be said that the whole class trembled before her, so that when she came in of a morning, and we were all returning in confusion from breakfast, she would clap her hands and every one would run to her stall, and one might have heard a fly. When we made our curtsey to her on entering the choir, I tried to read in her eyes, and if I thought her look severe I was in despair. I had got the habit of tearing at full speed through the house; but when I met Madame de Rochechouart, I stopped dead short. Then, when she looked at me, as her customary gaze is naturally severe, I fancied I had displeased her, and returned to the schoolroom quite disheartened, saying: 'Ah! Madame de Rochechouart

has made big eyes at me.' The others replied: 'How silly you are, do you expect her to make her eyes smaller when she meets you?' This was told to Madame de Rochechouart. The next time she saw me she called me, and laughingly asked me if she was looking at me the way I liked, and if her eyes were still very alarming. I answered that I thought them so beautiful that they gave more pleasure than fear; and she kissed me. She commands the love and respect of all the pupils, and though a little severe, is very just. We are all devoted to her, and yet fear her. She is not demonstrative, but a word from her has a most wonderful effect. She is accused of being proud and satirical to equals; but she is gracious and kind to her inferiors; very well informed and highly gifted."

III

The story of the Vicar of Saint Eustache—Hélène in the white class—Death of Mademoiselle de Montmorency.

Hélène had taken the greatest aversion to Mother Quatre Temps and her punishments. The more so that, thanks to her, she had been twice delayed from promotion into the white class, not being considered worthy of preparation for her first communion.

"I was only consoled," she says, "when it was the hour of Mother Sainte Bathilde's superintendence, for she knew so many stories that I was extremely amused by them.

"She was very fond of me, for I was always the most attentive listener directly she began relating her stories. I remembered every word she said, so that when she left us

I was able to repeat her stories, without omitting even one syllable. The whole blue class knelt around me in order to hear better, and even some of the white young ladies occasionally listened too.

"When I had finished telling Madame de Sainte Bathilde's stories, I related those of my grandmother, which were endless; for while narrating, I invented all the incidents, and they were most curious.

"No one could have replaced me with Madame de Sainte Bathilde in the attention I gave to the innumerable tales with which she deluged the class, although Madame de Rochechouart had several times requested her to desist telling these foolish stories, which made the pupils credulous and frightened. The temptation was too great; she began again every day. Sometimes she herself had seen things, or else it was some of her friends, till at last she told us a story which nearly caused her dismissal from the class. It was shortly after the death of the

Vicar of Saint Eustache, who had been found dead one morning in his church. The Curate of Saint Eustache, by name Mr. Giron, often came to see Madame Sainte Bathilde. The scholars had often seen him crossing the yard, and had noticed that his neck was awry. One day, when we were surrounding Mother Sainte Bathilde in the schoolroom, and she seemed more animated than usual, a pupil told her that from one of the windows of the depository [1] she had seen a priest pass by, going to the tower, and that his neck appeared to be twisted in a very peculiar manner. Madame Sainte Bathilde replied that he was coming to call on her, and was the Curate of Saint Eustache, whose neck had been dislocated by a most extraordinary adventure. We begged her eagerly to relate it. After having assured us that what she was going to relate was truth itself, she began as follows: 'As we all know, the late Vicar

[1] Room in which the records were kept.

of Saint Eustache rebuilt the front portal of his church, and stood in need of fifteen thousand livres[1] to finish it. He did not know where to obtain the money. So one of his friends advised him to consult a certain M. Etteilla, who had the reputation of performing wonders. The Vicar therefore went to him, and told him that he was in absolute want of fifteen thousand livres; begging him, if possible, to procure that sum. After much pressing M. Etteilla told the Vicar to meet him a little before midnight in the church of Saint Eustache, accompanied by only one person, and that he would see what he could do for him. The Vicar came punctually to the appointed place, bringing with him Mr. Giron, his Curate, whose neck at that time was as straight as yours or mine. When they were all three in the church, M. Etteilla drew a circle around them and told them not to move out of it, in spite of anything they might see;

[1] Six hundred pounds sterling.

but that very soon they would see near them a most appalling figure, who would inquire what they wanted. In reply they were to ask without hesitation for the sum of money required, and the phantom would present them with a purse, which they must hasten to take. M. Etteilla then began his incantations and closed the circle round the Vicar and the Curate. It was not long before they saw a kind of monster with horns rise out of the ground, who asked them in a voice of thunder: What they desired. The Vicar, terrified, moved out of the circle, and the monster felled him to the ground. He then returned to the circle, within which the Curate had remained, and repeated his question. The Curate asked for the sum of fifteen thousand livres. The monster held it out to him, but in taking it, having advanced his head a little too far, he received a blow which distorted his neck for life. The incantation being over, they went to pick up the Vicar, but found he was dead. They therefore made up their

minds to leave the body there, and so left the church.' The pupils having repeated this story to several people, it came to Madame de Rochechouart's ears; so she sent for Madame Sainte Bathilde, treated her with a high hand, and told her that when the next Chapter was held, she would have her dismissed from the class."

It must not be supposed that the belief in magicians was only the hobby of a credulous old nun. On the contrary, it was widespread at that time, and the most intelligent people were not above consulting them. The Duc d'Orléans and even the Prince de Ligne became acquainted with the famous Etteilla. The Prince says, in his unpublished writings, called *Fragments des Mémoires:* 'I very much regret having paid so little attention to the predictions of the great Etteilla. This magician had just arrived in Paris. I took M. le Duc d'Orléans to see him, Rue Fromenteau, on the fourth floor. He could not be acquainted with either of us. I know

that he spoke to him of a throne, of revolutions, of the royal family, of Versailles, of the Devil, but I only remember it all most confusedly. It is a fact that Etteilla described to Madame de Mérode the scene she witnessed a fortnight later: her husband (then in sound health) laid in state, with the description of the room and the people in it; all of which were unknown to him; and that everything happened as he had predicted. He also foretold that she would marry again.'

Etteilla was only the anagram of the sham magician's real name. He was called Alliette, sold engravings, and styled himself Professor of Algebra in Paris,[1] where in reality he occupied himself with fortune-telling by cards.

"It is customary every year to distribute prizes to the scholars on Saint Catherine's eve. It is always some married lady of rank

[1] He published in 1770 a small 12mo. vol. entitled *Method of Diverting Oneself with a Pack of Cards*, and in 1784 a fresh edition called *Method of Diverting Oneself with a Pack of Chequered Cards*.

who gives them away. The pupils contribute towards the expense of the prizes, each giving one louis. We were then a hundred and sixty-two in number, which made a large sum of money, and was all spent on books. There are three prizes for each class, the prizes being regulated as follows: Three prizes for history and geography, three for dancing, three for music, three for drawing. This year it was Madame la Duchesse de la Vallière who distributed them. I had the first prize for history and the second for dancing. Mademoiselle de Choiseul had the first prize for dancing and the second for history; but the fact was, we were about equal both in history and in dancing, neither M. Huart,[1] M. Dauberval,[2] nor even M. Philippe[3] could manage to decide between us. So, when we went up to receive the prize from the hands of Madame la

[1] Professor of History at the Abbaye-aux-Bois.

[2] First dancer at the Opera.

[3] The leader of the ballet at the Opera.

Duchesse,[1] Madame de Rochechouart told us that as there was only a single first prize, one of us should have it for history and the other for dancing, but that we both deserved them equally."

This shows how great was the importance attached to accomplishments, since the first prizes for history and dancing were adjudged together. Young as she was, Hélène really danced remarkably well: "At that time," she says, "I danced the *farlànes* and *montférines* (old French dances) most beautifully. Mademoiselle[2] came to our balls, and was so pleased with my dancing that both she and

[1] The Duchesse de la Vallière was the daughter of the Maréchal de Noailles. At fifty years of age she was still marvellously beautiful. On seeing her Madame d'Houdetot improvised the following stanza:

"La nature prudente et sage,
Force le temps à respecter,
Les charmes de ce beau visage,
Qu'elle ne saurait répéter."

Nature prudent and wise, Forces time to respect, The charms of that lovely face, Which she is powerless to repeat.

Madame de la Vallière's sister was the Comtesse de Toulouse.

[2] Mademoiselle (Louise-Adelaide de Bourbon-Condé), born on the 5th of October 1757, was the daughter of Louis-Joseph de Bourbon, Prince de Condé, and of Charlotte-Godefriede-Elizabeth de Rohan-Soubise. She became Abbess of Remiremont in 1786.

Madame la Duchesse de Bourbon[1] always begged that I should dance the *pas de deux*, and they gave me comfits."

Madame de Rochechouart knew what pleased her little favourite, and often allowed her to go out during this carnival. "Not a week passed," she says, "without my going to four or five children's balls at Madame de la Vaupalière,[2] hotel du Châtelet.[3] At that

[1] Louise-Marie-Thérèse-Bathilde d'Orléans, sister-in-law of Mademoiselle, was the daughter of the Duc Louis-Philippe d'Orléans and of Louise-Henrietta de Bourbon-Condé. She married, 14th April 1770, Louis-Henri-Joseph, Duc de Bourbon-Condé, born 14th April 1756, and brother to the above-mentioned Mademoiselle. The Duchesse de Bourbon was mother of the unfortunate Duc d'Enghien, shot under the first Empire. Her husband, passionately in love with her, obtained permission to marry her at fifteen years of age, but they were separated after the ceremony. Furious at this, the young prince carried her off.

[2] M. and Madame de la Vaupalière were very agreeable; she had much native grace and simplicity, and her affable and equal character made her generally beloved. M. de la Vaupalière was, unfortunately, a gambler, and nothing could cure him of this passion. At that time a small sort of case was invented, of a novel and convenient shape, for holding slips and counters. Madame de la Vaupalière had one made, of the richest and most beautiful workmanship, which she sent to her husband. On one side was her portrait and on the other that of her children, with these words: "*Songez à nous*" (think of us).

[3] The hotel du Châtelet, which was just finished, was situated

time they were going to act *Athalie* at the hotel de Mortemart.[1] One day Madame de Rochechouart made me read aloud the part of Joas, and she was so pleased with the way in which I read it that she spoke of it to her niece, the young Duchesse de Mortemart, who entreated, as a favour, that I should be allowed to act that part at her house, where they were going to perform *Athalie*. They had no one to undertake the part of Joas, Mademoiselle de Mortemart having no talent for tragedy."

The Dowager Duchesse de Mortemart and the Duchesse d'Harcourt mentioned it to the Abbess, who consented to the little Princess going out three times a week during

in the Rue de Grenelle, Faubourg Saint Germain, near the city gates. It was a magnificent building, and the interior arrangements and richness of the apartments corresponded with the beauty of the exterior.

The Marquise, afterwards Duchesse du Châtelet, was the daughter-in-law of the celebrated *Emilie* of Voltaire.

[1] The Duchesse de Mortemart resided with her sons at their beautiful house of the Rue Saint Guillaume, her daughter being educated at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. The mansion still exists, and bears the number 14 of the Rue Saint Guillaume.

one month for the rehearsals. Molé was sent for to direct the company. "I was very happy," Hélène writes, "for I always brought back sweetmeats, and Mademoiselle de Mortemart accompanied me. I went out three days during the performances, and it was thought that I acted better than the child at the Comédie Française. M. Molé recommended me particularly not to declaim at all, but to speak naturally, without gestures, as I would in conversation, and this succeeded very well."

A curious custom existed at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. On Saint Catherine's Day, in honour of that saint, the pupils were allowed to assume the dress, occupation, or rank of all the ladies in the Convent, from the Abbess down to the simplest nun. The nominations took place by the majority of votes, and the electoral body, composed of all the pupils, solemnly met the day before in the Chapter-house in order to vote. This year Hélène was elected Abbess,

and she relates the ceremony in its minutest details :—

"The Chapter-house was lent us for the elections. I was elected Abbess, and chose Mademoiselle de Choiseul for *régente ;* Mademoiselle de Conflans was crosier-bearer, Mademoiselle de Vaudreuil chaplain; Mesdemoiselles de Damas, de Montsauge, de Chauvigny, de Mortemart, and de Poyanne were appointed as my personal attendants. The remainder of the places were given by majority of votes. When this was done, we went to the Lady Abbess, who, according to custom, kissed me, took off her cross, fastened it on me, and put the *abbatial* ring on my finger. I entered into office the very next morning, and during High Mass, which we sang, I was seated on the Abbess's throne.

"It had been decorated with the carpet of purple velvet fringed with gold, only used on occasions of great ceremony. I received the incense, and, preceded by the crozier, went to kiss the paten. All the nuns heard Mass and

the services from the galleries, and the scholars occupied their stalls. I gave the holy water, and received the public confession of all the pupils. It was very funny to see nuns of five and six years old. A great many ladies came to see us in the choir and in the refectory, where I gave a grand dinner with ices. All the nuns and lady visitors were in the middle of the refectory in order to see us at table. Each of us put on the sedate mien appropriate to the costume she wore. After dinner we took possession of all the different functions, while the nuns, by way of a joke, settled themselves in the schoolrooms. None of us, however, dared to go and see Madame de Rochechouart; she could not endure these masquerades, and had said the day before that she wished to see no one. As for Madame Sainte Delphine, all this amused her intensely, and every one went to see her, each in their turn; the young Duchesse de Mortemart, Madame de Fitz-James, Madame de Bouillon, Madame

d'Henin, and the Vicomtesse de Laval spent the afternoon with her. We flocked in troops to see her; first, I went with all my court. We were made to talk and converse; in short, we greatly amused the ladies. But what pleased us most was, that suddenly the door opened and Madame de Rochechouart entered. Then, as we knew she did not like to see us like that, the Lady Abbess and her retinue took to their heels and fled. In the evening we went in state to carry back to the Abbess her cross and her ring, and we doffed our monastical clothes. The same festivities are repeated on Innocents' Day, and Mademoiselle d'Aumont was Abbess. Concerning the fear we had of displeasing Madame de Rochechouart. Madame Sainte Delphine was in the habit of saying that no Asiatic monarch could be more despotic in his rule than her sister was in hers, and it is true that we had a real worship for her. I must say in her praise that she rather influenced our minds than our persons, for she seldom

admonished or punished. We were perfectly convinced it was impossible she could be wrong in anything, and she inspired an unbounded confidence. It is difficult to imagine the extent of the enthusiasm Madame de Rochechouart excited in the schoolroom; our heads were turned with the honour we enjoyed in having such a great lady to preside over our education.

"The other mistresses, who depended on her, were always quoting her name as that of a divinity who punished or rewarded. The Lady Abbess held her in great esteem, for she allowed little intimacy. Those who saw her frequently formed a kind of court around her.

"About that time, my nurse having left a bottle of oil on the chimney-piece, Mademoiselle de Choiseul and I discovered that by rubbing oil on the door it could be opened without any noise. My nurse slept in the room next to mine. She was in the habit of locking the door inside at night, leaving the key in the lock. Mademoiselle de Choiseul's

room opened into mine. She used, therefore, to get up at night and come to my bedside; then we slipped on our dressing-gowns, softly opened the door, and ran about the house all night, amusing ourselves by playing all kinds of pranks; such as blowing out the lamps, knocking at the doors, going and talking to the novices and eating with them preserves, pies, and sweetmeats which we had secretly bought.

"Once we took a bottle of ink and poured it into the basin for holy water at the door of the choir. As the ladies go to Matins two hours after midnight, and know them by heart, there is no other light than that of a lamp, which throws a very faint glimmer on the holy-water vessel. They therefore took the holy water, without perceiving the state in which they put themselves; but as Matins were finishing the day broke, when, seeing each other so strangely marked, they laughed one and all so loud that the service was interrupted. It was suspected that this prank

originated in the school, and on the following day a search was made, but its authors were never discovered.

"A few days afterwards we played another trick. The bell-ropes, called 'The Gondi,' because they had been blessed by the Archbishop of Paris of that name, are used to ring for the services on working days, and are placed behind the choir, the larger and more important bells being in another belfry above the choir. These ropes pass through a gallery situated behind the Abbess's throne. We therefore went up into this gallery and tied our handkerchiefs tightly to the bell-ropes. When the novice who had to ring for Matins came, she pulled in vain. She thought she was ringing; but when the rope came to the knots it stopped, and the bells did not move, so that the ladies who were waiting for the first stroke of Matins to come down never came, and the novice was exhausted with ringing. At last some of the nuns, seeing that the hour for Matins was

going by, came down to see why no bells were ringing. They found the nun half dead with pulling the ropes. Then, perceiving that something must be wrong with the bells, they went up into the gallery and found the handkerchiefs. Unfortunately our initials were on them, H. M., J. C. They were, therefore, taken to Madame de Rochechouart, who inquired next day when she came into the schoolroom to whom belonged the handkerchiefs marked H. M. and J. C. Then we hung our heads. Madame de Rochechouart ordered us in a severe tone to leave our stalls, so we came to her, trembling all over, and knelt at her feet. She asked us if we imagined these ladies were made to be the butt of our practical jokes; she begged us not to exert our ingenuity in tormenting them, and said that, in order to remember this, we should kneel in our night-caps the following Sunday in the middle of the choir during High Mass, as an apology to the ladies for having amused ourselves at their expense;

and also, that, as we were answerable to God for the prayers which had not been said that day, Matins having been curtailed, we should have to recite out loud, during recreation, the seven penitential Psalms.

"Some ill-disposed nuns, having excited the Lady Abbess on the subject of these pranks, she sent for Madame de Rochechouart, and charged her with the disorders committed by the class, and with their wicked and spiteful behaviour. Madame de Rochechouart said it was false; that no doubt some of the pupils played tricks, but that as far as spite was concerned, nothing had come to her ears, and, moreover, that she had immediately punished the offenders. Then the Lady Abbess cited the tampering with the holy water as an act of impiety. Madame de Rochechouart, who was very quick tempered and hated mummeries, replied that the deed was dark, because it was a question of ink, but that it was impossible for her to see it in any other light than that of a child's frolic, carried rather

too far she admitted, whereupon she left the Lady Abbess in a tolerably bad temper.

"All the pranks Mademoiselle de Choiseul and I had played had considerably retarded the ceremony of my first communion. Mademoiselle de Choiseul had been in the white class for some time. As far as the lessons were concerned, I ought to have been in that class since the previous year, for I had at my fingers' ends all that was taught in the blue class. I knew ancient history, the history of France, and mythology very well; I knew by heart the whole poem of *La Religion*, the *Fables of La Fontaine*, two cantos of the *Henriade*, and all the tragedy of *Athalie*, in which I had acted the part of Joas. I danced very well; I knew how to sol-fa; I played the harpsichord a little and the harp a little; as for my drawing, that was the least good; but these continual pranks, into which I was partly drawn by my weakness for Mademoiselle de Choiseul, were very prejudicial to me. Every piece of

mischief done was set down to our account. I was so fond of Mademoiselle de Choiseul that I preferred being in disgrace with her, to seeing her punished alone. Her friendship for me was reciprocal, and when I was punished for any fault she went to the mistresses and grumbled in a way that soon caused her to share my disgrace. The whole day was not long enough for the communications we had to make to each other, and in the evening, as her room opened into mine, she came to me, or else I visited her. We were both very fond of reading, and so were Mesdemoiselles de Conflans: we read together in all our spare moments, each reading out loud in her turn.

"As we had left off our pranks for some time, Madame de Rochechouart availed herself of this opportunity to advance me into the white class, for she quite worshipped me, and was rather amused than angry at the tricks I used to play. Madame de Sainte Delphine, her sister, was also very fond of

me; she always said it would be a loss to the Convent if Choiseul and I became steady. She said that my frolics always bore the stamp of gaiety and wit, and, as a matter of fact, my tricks never harmed any one, and were always a subject of merriment.

"When my removal from the blue class was decided, I went and begged Mother Quatre Temps's pardon for all the worry I had given her, and thanked her for her kindness. She told me she was very sorry to be no longer on as intimate terms with me, and that although I had occasionally maddened her, there had been moments which had compensated for all. I embraced her.

"Several of my companions, Mademoiselle de Chauvigny among them, had tears in their eyes when Mother Quatre Temps came to take off my blue ribbon.

"I was received with acclamations by the white class, whose ribbon I received from the hand of Madame de Saint Pierre, head-

mistress of that class. The young ladies all came and kissed me. Of the three mistresses, Madame de Sainte Scholastique took my fancy the most, and I resolved to do all in my power to obtain her favour. She already preferred my friend Mademoiselle de Choiseul to all the other pupils.

"I was most anxious for the ceremony of my first communion, and was desirous not to remain long in the white class, where the mistresses had the reputation of being very severe."

Hélène's *Memoirs* prove that her intelligence and character were now beginning to develop in a remarkable manner. Her style becomes bolder, and frees itself from the childish phraseology in which she gives us the story of the cat, or enlarges on Mother Quatre Temps's punishments. Moreover, she will soon have more serious events to relate.

"We had great sorrows about this time, owing to the death of two of the pupils.

Mademoiselle de Chaponay[1] was the first that died. She was nine years old, and had a charming person. Mademoiselle de la Roche Aymon[2] was very much grieved, as she was her little mother. Mademoiselle de Chaponay was carried to her grave by four of the scholars, her coffin was covered with white roses, and the church was all draped in white.

"Mademoiselle de Montmorency's[3] death was far more dreadful.

"The Princesse de Montmorency wished her daughter's education to be conducted with great severity. When she was twelve

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[1] Daughter of M. de Chaponay, who had been implicated in Lally's trial, and was his aide-de-camp. M. de Chaponay was severely censured by the Court of Parliament. When summoned by name and declared infamous, he had the courage to refuse to kneel, and replied: "I see nothing infamous except your judgment!" The Court deliberated as to whether he should be imprisoned for making such a bold answer, but they dared not do so.

[2] Great-niece of the Cardinal de la Roche Aymon, Grand Almoner to the King.

[3] We have found in the records of the Council, at Geneva, an account of the arrival of the Princesse de Montmorency and her daughter; the authorisation given them "to harness their horses at night in order to send for the doctor or apothecary," and various other details, which confirm Hélène's narrative.

years old it was noticed that her figure was growing awry. She might perhaps be alive still if the suppositions of Madame de Saint Côme, the head lady apothecaress, had been credited.

"Madame de Saint Côme said that Mademoiselle de Montmorency suffered from a vitiated state of the blood, which impeded her growth, and that she was certain a treatment of antiscorbutic herbs, taken in decoctions, would purify the blood, when her figure would straighten of itself. This the Princesse de Montmorency would not admit. However, she was called away from the Convent on the occasion of her sister's marriage with M. le Duc de Montmorency Fosseuse, her cousin. She only returned after an absence of six months, and then quite unrecognisable. Without actual beauty, she still had had a very pleasing appearance; large fine black eyes, a white skin, a noble and proud carriage. Now, she was most fearfully emaciated, with a livid skin and a hard cough. She informed us of her

marriage with the Prince de Lambesc,[1] which was to take place during the course of the winter. It was with great difficulty that the persons interested had obtained his consent to the match, for he did not wish to marry, and it was only on their representing to him that she was the greatest French heiress, both in name and in fortune, that he finally pledged his word.

"Meanwhile Mademoiselle de Montmorency's figure was decidedly growing awry; and at last her mother put her under the care of *Val d'Ajonc*,[2] who tortured her for six

[1] Prince de Lambesc, grand equerry of France, son of the Comte de Brionne, of the house of Lorraine, and of the Comtesse de Brionne, born Rohan-Rochefort. He was colonel of the regiment called "De Lorraine."

When, on the 12th July 1789, the populace, uttering seditious cries, and carrying the busts of Necker and of the Duc d'Orléans round the Place Vendôme, was dispersed by the Prince's dragoons, they fled into the Tuilerie gardens; but the Prince, sword in hand, pursued them and forced them to leave. He died at Vienna in 1825.

[2] The Val d'Ajonc was a valley situated in Lorraine, and at this period was inhabited by a family who enjoyed a wonderful reputation as bone-setters. They took the name of the valley they inhabited. It is said that they were so hated by the surgeons that they had always to be accompanied and protected by armed force.

weeks. She wore bandages day and night, which aggravated the heated condition of her blood, till at last, becoming quite ill, she lost her hair and her teeth. One day she fell on her arm, which brought on a tumour in the armpit; the whole faculty in Paris was consulted in vain; not one could cure this tumour.

"Meanwhile the winter advanced, and considering the state she was in, it was impossible to give her in marriage. Moreover, M. de Lambesc told every one that he had no affection for her, and even took no trouble to conceal the repulsion he felt towards her; in consequence the marriage was postponed for a year.

"They determined to take the young girl to Geneva in order to place her under the care of the *Mountain Doctor*.[1] She came to say good-bye to us. She had retained her beautiful eyes alone. I cried a great deal on

[1] We have been unable to discover the name of this doctor. In all probability he was simply a bone-setter, or rubber, from the hills of Vuache, such as still exist in Savoy, and who are often consulted at Geneva.

leaving her; she was my little mother. She gave me a keepsake in old lacquer, and told me to pray for her, and to be very good. She was much regretted, for she had a very beautiful nature, and was loved by all.

"Three months after she had left I awoke one night feeling very much agitated and called my nurse. She came, and I said to her: 'Ah, I have just dreamt that I saw Mademoiselle de Montmorency in a white dress, and wearing a wreath of white roses; she told me she was going to be married. Since then I keep fancying that I see her two large black eyes looking at me, and it frightens me.' A few days after we heard the news of Mademoiselle de Montmorency's death; she had died the same night I dreamt of her.

"We heard that the bone of her arm had decayed and was all rotting away. They had tried to induce her mother to leave the room, but she flung herself down on the threshold of the door, sobbing most violently. When Mademoiselle de Montmorency saw her arm

had mortified, she said to Madame de la Salle, a friend of her mother's, who was with her: 'Now death is beginning!' Then Madame de la Salle gently proposed her receiving the Sacraments, and she consented.

"From that moment she ceased to see her mother, whose mind had completely given way. She begged Madame de la Salle to ask her mother's forgiveness for any trouble she might have caused her; then she requested her to tell Madame de Rochechouart, that if she died, her greatest sorrow would be not to have had her with her during her last moments; then she gathered her attendants round her, asked their forgiveness, and received the Sacraments.

"Afterwards she sent for her doctor, and begged him to tell her frankly if he thought she would recover. Seeing he appeared embarrassed and that Madame de la Salle was crying, she said: 'Ah! I did not know it was so certain. Oh, my God! take all my fortune, and call me back to life.' Upon which,

he told her not to lose courage. 'Yes, she replied, 'for I feel I need it all, to die at fifteen.'

"However, the young Duchesse de Montmorency and her husband arrived in the evening with the Duc de Laval; the doctor informed them she could not live through the night, as the gangrene was rapidly spreading.

"A few moments later Mademoiselle de Montmorency asked for her mother, but she could not come, for she was almost out of her mind with grief. They told her she was ill. She therefore asked for her sister, the Duchesse de Montmorency, who came at once. She said to her: 'Tell all my companions at the Abbaye-aux-Bois that I am giving them a great example of the nothingness of human life. I had everything to make me happy in this world, and yet death snatches me away from my high destiny.' Then she gave her many particular messages for Madame d'Equilly and Madame de la

Faluère, and said she was to tell me to pray to God for my little mother.

"She asked for her confessor, and said to him: 'Well, since I must die, you must teach me how to renounce life, for surely I should have the merit of such a sacrifice.' Then the confessor brought a crucifix and began reciting the psalms, but he avoided those for the dying. Then she said: 'Ah, I no longer suffer!' For the last two days indeed she had hardly suffered, but previous to this she had gnawed her sheets with frenzy, and her screams could be heard a long way off. She asked for a peppermint lozenge, they put one in her mouth, she made an effort as though to cough, and expired.[1]

[1] The Princesse de Montmorency, beside herself with grief, left suddenly, and on her return to the Château de Sénozan, wrote to the "Magnificent Council" of Geneva to thank them for the funeral honours accorded to her daughter:—

"GENTLEMEN—M. des Chênes has arrived and informed me of the many courtesies the Magnificent Council have shown him, as my representative, and the honours they have bestowed on my daughter. If anything could alleviate my grief, it would be the manner in which they have taken part in my affliction. Your attentions during her illness had already greatly touched me, but

"When her death was announced to the class the grief was universal, and I in particular wept much for her. A magnificent commemorative service was held, which was founded in perpetuity to her memory by the payment of a sum of forty thousand francs.[1]

"There is one anecdote which I have heard related about Mademoiselle de Montmorency which shows that she possessed some native energy of character.

"When she was about eight or nine years old, and Madame de Richelieu was the ruling power, she one day behaved with great obstinacy towards the Lady Abbess, who said angrily to her: 'When I see you like that, I could kill you.' Mademoiselle de Montmorency replied: 'It would not be the first time

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all that you have done under these circumstances has engraved in my heart the most vivid and sincere gratitude.

"Receive, gentlemen, I pray, my best assurances thereof, and be fully persuaded of the perfect and inviolable attachment with which I have the honour to be, sirs, your very humble and obedient servant, MONTMORENCY."

(Geneva. Records of the Magnificent Council, February 1775.)

[1] Sixteen hundred pounds.

that the Richelieus had been the murderers of the Montmorencys.'"

Such a haughty answer in the mouth of a child is surprising enough, but it shows the extraordinary development of children at that period; and the account that Hélène herself gives of the death of her companion is a striking proof of this. It is impossible to relate a story better; not a line is wanting in the picture; and the simplicity of the style adds yet more to the effect of the narrative.

IV

Moles and niggers — Mutiny in the Convent — Marriage of Mademoiselle de Bourbonne—The first communion.

"About this time Dom Rigoley de Juvigny having come to confess a nun, happened to be in the cloisters at the moment when the class was leaving Mass, so that he was seen by all the pupils, and was the butt of all their jokes.

"If it had been Dom Thémines, our own confessor, we should not have allowed ourselves all these jokes, but we thought it of no consequence when it was the nuns' confessor. So one said one thing, one another.

"There was then in the red class a mistress we could not endure, called Madame de Saint Jérôme. As her complexion was very dark, and Dom Rigoley's also, some of us

declared that if they were married their offspring would be moles and little niggers. Although it was very silly, this joke became so much the fashion that in the whole class we talked of nothing but moles and little niggers; and when we quarrelled we said to each other: 'Do you take me for a mole, or for a little nigger?'

"However, as it was chiefly in our class (the white one) that this joke had been made, and as some of us were in the midst of our devotions preparing for the approaching first communion, we reproached ourselves very much for this joke. So we determined to confess it; but as about thirty of us were guilty, we wrote a letter in which we said we had sinned against modesty and charity by saying that if Dom Rigoley married Madame de Saint Jérôme, moles and little niggers would be the result; and we sent the letter to Dom Thémines. This became known all through the establishment, and was much laughed at; but Madame de Saint Jérôme

took a great aversion to the white class. But then, there was not a single pupil whom she liked or who liked her.

"This worried and vexed Madame de Rochechouart, who said that she had already for some time past begged that new elections should be held, and that Madame de Saint Jérôme should be deprived of her place, since she was not fit for it. For, during the six months she had occupied that post she had succeeded in making herself universally hated, without being feared by her pupils, since even the blue class amused itself by covering her with ridicule. That she was made the subject of all the satires, songs, and lampoons that were stuck up in All Souls' cloisters, that she had not the necessary coolness to deal with children, and that when she inflicted punishments she always did so when beside herself with anger. The Lady Abbess told Madame de Rochechouart that it was impossible for her to attend to this, and that she must speak to the

Mother Prioress about it. The Prioress said they would have to hold a general Chapter meeting, and that it was not worth while calling one together for that purpose; as one was going to be held shortly, it would then be possible to make a change in the school. Then Madame de Rochechouart became very angry, and said she could not answer for the disturbances that such a hot-headed person might occasion amongst a hundred and sixty pupils. As ill luck would have it, rumours of this dispute reached our ears, and we heard that Madame de Saint Jérôme continued in the schoolroom against the wish of Madame *la Maîtresse Générale*.

"A short time after the Chapter assembled; but Madame de Rochechouart could not be present at it, as she had a cold. The other mistresses had not the courage to propose to the Chapter the removal of Madame de Saint Jérôme, so that she remained in the schoolroom. Madame de Rochechouart was extremely vexed at this. Then the pupils,

with Mesdemoiselles de Mortemart, de Choiseul, de Chauvigny, de Conflans and myself at their head, resolved to seize the first opportunity of perpetrating some grand stroke which would oblige her to leave the class."

While waiting to execute their plans, the leaders of the conspiracy, acting with prudence, wished to satisfy themselves as to the number of their followers. Hélène relates this with all the solemnity of a politician :—

"We called together a meeting of five or six pupils of each class, and it was agreed that those who did not like Madame de Saint Jérôme, and who were determined to do everything they could to have her removed, should wear green ; that is, either a leaf, or a bit of weed, or a ribbon, in fact something green ; that each of those who were present at this meeting should make her friends in her class wear green, and that in order to be able to recognise each other and avoid explanations which might be over-

heard when we met, we would say 'Je vous prends sans vert.' (I catch you unawares.) That then we would show the colour, and those who had not got it would be considered as not belonging to the mutinous party; and that as it was very possible that either from timidity or other reasons some of the pupils would change their minds, those persons should then be obliged to leave off wearing the green; so that in this way there would be no mistake as to who belonged to the league."

An opportunity soon occurred for putting these fine plans into execution.

"One holiday, on the eve of Saint Magdalene, who was the patron saint of the Lady Abbess, all the pupils had left their departments to come and play in the schoolroom. As we already had had recreation for two days, all the mistresses were tired out; so they had agreed, in order to have some rest, to remain only one at a time in the schoolroom. About four o'clock Madame

de Saint Jérôme's turn came, and we took it into our heads not to do a single thing she should tell us. All of a sudden the little de Lastic[1] and the little de Saint Simon girls began quarrelling, and ended by coming to fisticuffs. Madame de Saint Jérôme went up to separate them, and without knowing who was right or wrong, she took Mademoiselle de Lastic by the arm, and tried to make her go down on her knees. Mademoiselle de Lastic said: 'Madame, I assure you, it was not I who began.' Thereupon Madame de Saint Jérôme flew into a dreadful rage, seized Mademoiselle de Lastic by the neck, and threw her down so violently that she fell on her nose, which began to bleed. When we saw the blood we gathered round her, and swore that not only we should not allow her to be punished, but that we would throw Madame de Saint Jérôme out of the window, because she had murdered one of us.

[1] Her mother, the Comtesse de Lastic, was lady-in-waiting to Mesdames de France.

Madame de Saint Jérôme was so frightened at our screams, and the noise we made, that she quite lost her head. She was afraid of some violence, seeing how excited we were. She therefore resolved to retreat, saying she would go and complain to Madame de Rochechouart. It was a great mistake on her part to leave the class at such a moment without a mistress. Mortemart[1] got on the table and said: 'Let all those who have green show it.' Then every one did so, and those who had none begged the others to give them some. On seeing that our party was so strong, Mortemart said we must withdraw from the schoolroom, and return only under conditions both advantageous and honourable. It was decided to go through the garden, secure the kitchen and larders, and reduce the ladies by famine.

"We therefore crossed the garden, and went to the building containing the kitchens.

[1] Mademoiselle de Mortemart was Madame de Rochechouart's niece. She married in 1777 the Marquis de Rougé.

This building had only one floor; on which were the storerooms, the larders, and the bakery. The kitchens were underground. We first entered the storeroom, where we only found Madame Saint Isidore and Sister Martha. We very politely begged them to leave, and they were so frightened on seeing us that they went away at once. The larders and the bakery being shut up, we proposed to burst them open; then we went down into the kitchens, after having left one of our party in the storeroom. We were rather astonished to find a number of people in the kitchens, amongst others one of the schoolmistresses, Madame de Saint Antoine, for whom we had great respect. She asked us what we wanted: Mademoiselle de Mortemart replied that we had fled from the schoolroom because Madame de Saint Jérôme had broken the head of one of the pupils Startled at this piece of news, she did not know what to say; she, however, tried to induce us to return, but we told her it was useless. Then she

left us and ran to the schoolroom to verify it all. Madame de Saint Amélie, head of the kitchen department, tried to turn us out, but we turned her out. As for Madame de Saint Sulpice, who was sixteen years old, she wanted to leave, but we would not allow her; we told her that we should keep her as a witness that we did not waste the provisions of the establishment. We wanted to turn out the lay sisters, but Madame de Saint Sulpice having represented to us that in that case we should have no supper, we kept Sister Clothilde. Then we bolted the doors opening into the refectory, and left those on the gardens open; but about thirty of the pupils remained to guard them. We then resolved to capitulate, and these were our terms:—

"'*The United Scholars of the Three Classes of the Abbaye-aux-Bois, to Madame de Rochechouart, Maîtresse Générale.*

"'We entreat your forgiveness, Madame, for the measures that we have taken; but the

cruelty and incapacity of Madame de Saint Jérôme forced them upon us. We request a general amnesty for the past, that Madame de Saint Jérôme shall not put her foot again inside the schoolroom, and that we have eight days' recreation, to rest our bodies and minds after the fatigues we have undergone. As soon as we shall have obtained justice, we will return and submit ourselves to whatever it may please you to dictate.

"'We have the honour to remain, with the deepest respect and tenderest attachment, Madame, etc.

"'*P.S.*—We send two of our party as bearers of this petition. If they are not sent back to us, we shall consider it a sign that you do not choose to treat with us: in which case we shall go in open force to fetch Madame de Saint Jérôme and whip her round the four corners of the Convent.'

"Mademoiselle de Choiseul offered to carry the letter, and I consented to accompany her. When we came to the end of the garden we

saw a numerous assembly of nuns and sisters, brought thither by curiosity, to see what the pupils would do. But none of them dared to approach the building. When they saw us they came up to us, saying: 'Well, what are the rebels about?' We answered that we were taking their proposals to Madame de Rochechouart.

"We entered her cell, but she looked at us with an air of such severity that I turned quite pale, and Choiseul, bold as she was, trembled. Madame de Rochechouart asked whether the young ladies were in the school-room. We said no. 'Then,' said she, 'I will listen to nothing from them; you may carry your complaint to the Lady Abbess, or to any one you choose; I will have nothing to do in the matter, and you have taken the best means of disgusting me with trying to manage such a set of madcaps, more fit to be enlisted amongst the followers of some army than to acquire the modesty and gentleness which are the charm of woman.' We were

much confused, and Mademoiselle de Choiseul, who had more courage than I, threw herself at her feet, and said that a word from her would always be sovereign law, and that she did not doubt that each one felt the same, but that in an affair of honour we would sooner die than seem to betray or abandon our companions. 'Well,' said Madame de Rochechouart, 'speak to whom you will, for I have ceased to be your mistress.' We left her, and went to the abbatial rooms. The Lady Abbess read our petition, but not in our presence; we only knew that Madame de Rochechouart was sent for, but we did not hear what took place. Only when the Lady Abbess received us, she told us such conduct was unheard of, that such an event had never occurred before, even in a college, and she asked who was at the head of the rebellion. We answered that it had been the inspiration of the moment, and that it seemed as if the whole class had had but one mind.

"Madame de Rochechouart was there, and did not say a word. 'Well,' said the Lady Abbess, 'if the young ladies will return, I will grant a general amnesty, but that is all I can do. As for Madame de Saint Jérôme, she is a person of great merit, and this fine hatred of her is a mere whim.' However, we went our way back to the kitchens. All the people we met questioned us. When we got back everybody surrounded us, saying: 'What news?'—'None!' we answered mournfully. Then we told them what had been said to us; and the young ladies soon made up their minds. They begged Madame de Saint Sulpice to give out the provisions. Madame de Saint Sulpice said she was only assistant nun in the kitchens, and had not got the keys. Then we broke open the doors of the bakery and meat-store, and Sister Clothilde, after some resistance, was obliged to give in to numbers, and prepared the supper, which was very merry. We did a thousand foolish things; we drank Madame

de Rochechouart's health, and the affection the pupils all had for her is proved by this, that our only fear was lest she should leave the class; but we said to ourselves, that in the bottom of her heart she would forgive us all this; one of the chief reasons that had made us take a dislike to Madame de Saint Jérôme being that Madame de Rochechouart did not approve of her being in the schoolroom. The best joke was that Madame de Saint Sulpice, who was lively and amiable, was in the best possible spirits, and was quite reconciled to having been so forcibly detained. After supper we played at all sorts of games, and she played with us. She kept saying that she seemed to be there as a hostage, and that if the young ladies were not pleased she would be the one to blame. When bedtime came we made up a sort of couch, with some straw, which we took from the backyard. It was decided that this couch should be for Madame de Saint Sulpice, but she re-

fused it, and said we must give it up to the youngest girls, who were the most delicate. We therefore settled on it the little Fitz-James, Villequier, Montmorency, and several other children of five or six years of age. We wrapped up their heads in napkins and clean kitchen cloths, so that they should not catch cold. About thirty of the older girls posted themselves in the garden before the door, for fear of a surprise. The others remained in the kitchens. And so we spent the night, partly in talking, partly in sleeping, as best we could. Next morning we prepared to spend the day in the same way, and we felt as if this state of things was to last all our lives. However, as we afterwards heard, they were all in a great state of perplexity at the Convent. Some were of a mind to frighten us by calling in the patrol; but Madame de Rochechouart said the real mischief would lie in the scandal this would occasion, and that it would be more advisable to send for the mothers of those pupils who

were supposed to be the ringleaders. Accordingly Madame la Duchesse de Châtillon, Madame de Mortemart, Madame de Blot, Madame du Châtelet arrived. They came to our camp, and called their daughters and their nieces. These did not dare to resist, and so they carried them off. Then a lay sister was despatched to the pupils to say that the schoolroom was open, that it was ten o'clock, and that all those who should be back in class by twelve would have a general pardon for past conduct. After a great consultation, the principal mutineers being gone, we all returned and ranged ourselves in our places. We found all the mistresses assembled, and even Madame de Saint Jérôme, who seemed rather embarrassed, was there. Madame Saint Antoine said we deserved to be punished, but, however, that it was the return of the prodigal child. This mistress was at the head of the red class,—she belonged to the Talleyrand family,—and was much beloved and respected. Madame Saint Jean was

delighted to see us back; she told us she had felt very dull during our absence; in fact all the mistresses were most indulgent.

"It was with much dread that we looked forward to the moment when we should have to appear before Madame de Rochechouart. This was not till the evening, when the names were called over. Much to our astonishment, she did not say one word about what had happened; and indeed, some of us innocently persuaded ourselves that she had altogether ignored it. As for me, when the Duchesse de Mortemart had come to ask for her daughter, she had said to me: 'My sister-in-law has had great pleasure in acting as a mother toward you; it is for you to show whether you mean to confirm that title by obeying her orders. She has asked for you. Let us go to her.' I immediately followed the Duchesse de Mortemart and her daughter. We were taken to the school-room, whither the remainder of the scholars shortly after returned. I only saw Madame

de Rochechouart in the evening, when our names were called. When my turn came, she looked at me with a smile, and chucked me under the chin, and I kissed her hand. The next day everything resumed its usual course.

"Madame de Saint Jérôme was left for another month in the schoolroom, and then removed to other functions. About thirty of the pupils had not joined in the insurrection, amongst others Lévis, and they were simply wretched. They were tormented and run down by the whole class; they had fancied they would gain great credit by their conduct; but Madame de Rochechouart did not like them any the better for it. One of them said one day to Madame de Rochechouart: 'I was not in the insurrection,' and Madame de Rochechouart answered, in an absent manner: 'I compliment you.'"

Shortly after this memorable episode the young girls were much interested in the marriage of one of their companions,—

Mademoiselle de Bourbonne, — and Hélène does not fail to describe it.

"One day Mademoiselle de Bourbonne returned from her stay in society looking very depressed, and remained a long time with Madame de Rochechouart. The next day all her relations came to see Madame de Rochechouart, and ten days later she came to us, conducted by Mesdemoiselles de Châtillon, the eldest of whom was her great friend, to announce her marriage with M. le Comte d'Avaux, son of M. le Marquis de Mesme. We all gathered round her, and asked her a hundred questions. She was barely twelve years old, was to make her first communion a week thence, to be married eight days after that, and then return to the Convent.[1] She seemed so very melancholy that we asked her if her intended did not please her. She frankly told us that he was very ugly and very old, and she added that

[1] This kind of marriage was frequent at that period.

he was coming to see her the next day. We begged the Lady Abbess to have the Orléans apartments, which looked on to the Abbatial court, thrown open to us, so that we might view the intended husband of our companion, and she granted our request.

" The next day, on awaking, Mademoiselle de Bourbonne received a large bouquet, and in the afternoon M. d'Avaux came. We thought him horrible, which he certainly was. When Mademoiselle de Bourbonne came out of the parlour, we all said to her: 'Ah! good heavens! how ugly your husband is; if I were you, I would not marry him. Ah! you unfortunate girl!' And she said: 'Oh, I shall marry him, because papa insists upon it; but I shall not love him, that is certain.' It was decided that she should not see him again till the day she made her first communion, so that her attention should not be distracted. She made her first communion at the end of eight days, and four or five days after was married in the chapel of the hôtel d'Havré.

"She returned to the Convent the same day. She was given jewels, diamonds, and magnificent wedding presents from Boland; what amused her most was that we all called her Madame d'Avaux. She told us that after the wedding ceremony there had been a breakfast at her mother-in-law's; that they had wanted her to kiss her husband, but that she began to cry, and absolutely refused; and that then her mother-in-law had said she was only a child. Henceforth her strong aversion to her husband only grew and flourished, and once when he asked for her in the parlour, she pretended to have sprained her ankle sooner than go down to see him."

On hearing of such marriages it is impossible not to feel some indulgence for the theory of free choice so eloquently pleaded by the women and philosophers of that period. We are therefore scarcely surprised to hear that some years later Madame d'Avaux, on meeting in society the Vicomte de Sègur, youngest brother of the ambas-

sador, was so captivated by his charming wit and personal attractions that she was drawn into an intimacy which lasted all her life.

The arch and ingenuous narrative of the little Princess also enables us to touch the weak point in this Convent education, so admirable in many respects. These young girls, brought up away from a world they were burning to know, were destined beforehand to be carried away by its temptations. How was it possible for the nuns to warn them against dangers of which they themselves were ignorant? A mother alone can fulfil that duty; and though the Convent may form the character and manners, adorn the mind and develop accomplishments, it is family life alone that can create *woman* in the highest and healthiest sense of the word.

But let us return to Hélène, who was preparing for her first communion, together with her friends Mesdemoiselles de Mortemart, de Châtillon, de Damas, de Montsauge, de

Conflans, de Vaudreuil,[1] and de Chauvigny. The great day arrived, and the young friends partook together of the communion.

"On that day," says Hélène, "the pupils do not wear their Convent dress, but a white gown, striped or embroidered in silver. Mine was in watered silk striped with silver. Nine days after we made a gift of our dresses to the vestry. We folded our gowns, fetched from the vestry large silver salvers, and after the Gospel, during the offertory, we went one after the other and laid our gift on the altar next to the choir. After Mass we went to the schoolroom, where our white ribbons were taken off and red ones given us instead, and all the class embraced and congratulated us."

[1] Mesdemoiselles de Conflans and de Vaudreuil were sisters. Mademoiselle de Conflans was pretty, had a great deal of wit and spirit of repartee. She married the Marquis de Coigny. Her sister, who was neither as pretty nor as witty, tried to imitate her in everything (Hélène's own note).

V

The Convent duties—The Abbess's department—Balls at the Abbaye-aux-Bois—Madame de Rochechouart and her friends.

When the retreat that followed the first communion was ended, the Chapter assembled in order to decide what should be the function assigned to each of the pupils recently admitted to the Holy Communion.

It was an established custom at the Abbaye-aux-Bois for the pupils to perform the duties of the Convent in its nine different offices, which were as follows :—

The abbatial.[1]
The sacristy.
The parlour.
The dispensary.

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[1] The apartments belonging to the Abbess.

The linen department.
The library.
The refectory.
The kitchen.
The community.

A certain number of lay sisters were associated with them in these employments, which only occupied a limited number of hours, and did not interfere with accomplishments, but formed the greatest contrast with them, as well as with the aristocratic names of the young ladies. Mesdemoiselles de la Roche Aymon and de Montbarrey could be seen carefully arranging the piles of napkins and sheets in the presses, while Mesdemoiselles de Chauvigny and de Nantouillet laid the cloth; Mesdemoiselles de Beaumont and d'Armaillé added up the accounts; Mademoiselle d'Aiguillon mended a chasuble; Mademoiselle de Barbantanne was on duty at the gate; Mademoiselle de Latour-Maubourg gave out the sugar and the coffee;

Mesdemoiselles de Talleyrand and de Duras were at the orders of the community; Mademoiselle de Vogüé had a particular talent for cooking; and Mesdemoiselles d'Uzès and de Boulainvilliers superintended the sweeping of the dormitories, under the direction of Madame de Bussy, irreverently nicknamed by the pupils *la mère Graillon;* finally, Mesdemoiselles de Saint Simon and de Talmont were responsible for repairs; and Mesdemoiselles d'Harcourt, de Rohan-Guéménée, de Brassac, and de Galaar lighted the lamps, under the supervision of Madame de Royaume, whom they called *the Mother of Light.*

After having acted the part of *Esther* in a dress embroidered with diamonds and pearls worth a hundred thousand écus,[1] Hélène returned to the Convent, and, resuming her little black frock again, prepared decoctions and poultices in the dispensary.

[1] An écu was five shillings.

Such an education may appear strange to us, but it unquestionably prepared excellent housekeepers and accomplished women of the world.

"I was very anxious," Hélène says, "that we should not be separated, and that we should be placed together in the dispensary. On the contrary, I was sent to the abbey-house, and Mademoiselle de Choiseul to the record office. Mesdemoiselles de Conflans, who did not know how to hold a needle, were sent to the sacristy. This made us very cross.

"However, if Mademoiselle de Choiseul had been with me, I should have been very happy at the abbey-house, where the Lady Abbess[1] ruled with the greatest gentleness and justice. She had taken a great liking to me; she considered that I did her commis-

[1] Marie-Madeleine de Chabrillan. She was first a nun at the Abbaye-de-Chelles, then Abbess of the Parc-aux-Dames, and lastly Abbess of the Royal Abbaye of Notre-Dame-aux-Bois, where she succeeded Madame de Richelieu, sister of the famous Marshal.

sions with intelligence. I was quick, and when she rang I was always the first to come; I knew her books, her papers, her work, and was always the one she sent to fetch what she required from her desk, her bookshelf, or her chiffonier."

Hélène's companions at the abbey-house were apparently amiable, judging by the record she has left us.

"Mademoiselle de Châtillon, nicknamed *Tatillon* (busybody), fourteen years old, serious, pedantic, very pretty, but rather stout.

"Madame d'Avaux, born a Bourbonne, twelve years old, just married, very small, a pretty face, silly, but good-natured.

"Mademoiselle de Mura, nicknamed *la Précieuse* (the conceited), eighteen years old, pretty, handsome even, witty, amiable, but rather pretentious.

"Mademoiselle de Lauraguais, very pretty, quiet, gentle, not clever; was married the same year to the Duc d'Aremberg.

"Mademoiselle de Manicamp, her sister, plain, kind, very intelligent, hasty, passionate.

"I had become very intimate with Madame de Sainte Gertrude and Madame Saint Cyprien; they were regular madcaps, fond of laughter and amusement. Mademoiselle de Manicamp was also a great addition to society. Madame d'Avaux used to tell us so very frankly that she cordially detested her husband, that we were always joking about it; and openly made fun of him whenever he came to see her, as unfortunately for him the windows of the Abbess's apartments looked out on the yard, so that it was impossible for him to avoid our mischievous glances.

"Mademoiselle de Mortemart was also on duty at the abbey-house, and her presence alone was sufficient to banish all dulness and melancholy. We laughed at the grand airs Madame de Torcy gave herself, and maintained that she had only become a nun because she had found in Jesus Christ alone a spouse worthy of her, and even then she was

not quite sure she had not made a *mésalliance !*

"Madame de Romelin, all bristling over with Greek and Latin, amused us also; we called her Aristotle's eldest daughter; this did not make her angry, as she was very good-natured.

"But our great delight was to establish the pretentious Mura at the harpsichord; then she sang, and Madame de Sainte Gertrude, who was extremely merry and an excellent mimic, stood behind her, and imitated all her affectations.

"A great many people also came to ask for permits, or to speak to Madame de Royer, or to the Lady Abbess.

"This dissipation might suit a good many other people, but for my part I was rather bored by the functions at the abbey-house; I do not know why, but this fashion of dancing attendance on others seemed to me humiliating."

It was the custom at the Abbaye-aux-Bois

to give a ball once a week during the carnival.

"On that day," says the young Princess, "we laid aside our school dress, and every mother decked out her daughter as well as she could; our attire on these occasions was most elegant. A great many women of the world attended our balls, especially young married ladies, who, not being able to go out alone, preferred them to those of the fashionable world, as they were not obliged to remain all the time seated next to their mothers-in-law."

It is evident that already at this period a young married woman dreaded the tyranny of a mother-in-law, who indeed exercised a far greater authority over her than even her own mother. The mother-in-law was alone privileged to accompany the young married woman in society. Probably it was reasonable enough to expect less indulgence on her part than on a mother's, and the husband preferred this safeguard, precluded as he was

by custom and the fear of exciting ridicule from watching or even noticing his wife. We shall see that the supervision of the mother-in-law could ill be dispensed with for some of these giddy young women.

"One day, when Madame de Luynes [1] and Madame de la Roche Aymon [2] were at the ball, they sent away their carriages, and hid themselves in Mademoiselle d'Aumont's [3] apartment. After the bell had been rung for silence, they began making the most horrible noise, which they kept up in the Convent throughout the night. They broke all the pitchers that are put outside the

[1] Guyonne de Montmorency Laval. She married the Duc de Chevreuse in 1765, and became Duchesse de Luynes at the death of her father-in-law in 1774. Their mansion was situated in the Rue Saint Dominique. She was appointed lady-of honour to the Queen Marie-Antoinette in 1775.

[2] The Marquise de la Roche Aymon was appointed in 1776 lady-in-waiting to the Queen. Her husband was major-general and nephew of Cardinal de la Roche Aymon, first almoner to the King Louis XV., and Archbishop of Rheims.

[3] Mademoiselle d'Aumont, daughter of the Duc d'Aumont, first equerry to the King. The hôtel d'Aumont was in the Rue de Jouy. The ceilings, painted by Lebrun, and the staircase, and buildings looking on the gardens, were greatly admired.

ladies' cells; they stopped all the nuns whom they met going to Matins; in fact, they made a most diabolical noise.

"The Lady Abbess gave orders that these ladies should not be in any way insulted, but that they should be given no food, and not be allowed to leave the Convent. When eleven o'clock struck, they asked for something to eat, but they were refused; then they requested that the gates should be opened, but Madame de Saint Jacques, who was head portress, said that the keys were at the Lady Abbess's. Then they sent Mademoiselle d'Aumont to beg the Lady Abbess to have the doors opened for them. The Lady Abbess sent them word that having remained without her permission, they should not leave till their families came to fetch them away; upon which they were in despair. Madame de Rochechouart, on the other hand, warned them to be careful when the pupils were going or returning from Mass or the refectory, as she could not answer for their not being

insulted should they find themselves in their way. If the truth be known, we were most anxious to hoot them, and turn them into derision; we were even ready to throw water at them. Meanwhile Madame de la Roche Aymon was expected to dinner at her uncle's, the Cardinal de la Roche Aymon, and Madame la Duchesse de Chevreuse on her side was expecting her daughter-in-law, Madame la Duchesse de Luynes. Their attendants said they had remained at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. Accordingly their relations sent word that they were waiting for them; but the Lady Abbess wrote to Madame de Chevreuse, and to the Cardinal, that Mesdames de Luynes and de la Roche Aymon were not quite right in their heads, and that she would hand them over only to their relations. Madame de Chevreuse, in a state of anxiety, hurried to the Abbey, when she soundly rated her daughter-in-law; and the two prisoners, very much annoyed at this adventure, were given into her charge.

"Mademoiselle d'Aumont excused herself by saying she was not aware that these ladies were hiding in her room, but there was every reason to believe she was implicated in the plot.

"A fine story occurred at another ball. Mademoiselle de Chevreuse found a note appointing a meeting, addressed to Madame la Vicomtesse de Laval, who had been at the ball and had dropped it. The note ran as follows: 'You are adorable, my dear Vicomtesse; trust in my discretion and my fidelity. To-morrow at the same hour and in the same house.' On finding this note, Mademoiselle de Chevreuse immediately read it and put it in her pocket; after the ball she showed it to all the red class. We could well imagine that it was a gentleman who wrote to her like that. The mistresses, hearing of it, insisted on having the note, and we believe it must have been returned to Madame de Laval, as she never came again to the Convent for any of the carnival balls."

There was much talk in Paris two years later concerning an affront sustained by Madame de Laval. Bachaumont mentions that Madame de Laval presented herself for the post of lady-in-waiting to Madame. It had been almost promised her, but she was refused it because her father, M. de Boulogne, had been treasurer in the war department, and therefore was not of gentle birth. Her father-in-law, M. de Laval, first gentleman of the chamber to Monsieur, sent in his resignation. The whole family of the Montmorency made an outcry over it.

Madame de Laval was the daughter of M. de Boulogne, *fermier général*.[1] From the anecdote related by the young Princess, and from a certain account given in Lauzun's *Memoirs*, it seems probable that the alleged motive was only a pretext, in order to avoid placing in attendance on Madame a person with such a reputation for heedlessness.

[1] Tax-gatherer, who for a certain sum leased out from Government the collection of the taxes.

The Sacristy.

"After having served three months in the abbey-house I was sent to the sacristy or vestry department, where the company was very amusing. As for the duties, they did not suit me at all, for I have always had an incredible aversion to needlework. There were at that time some very agreeable persons employed in this department, amongst others Mademoiselle de Broye and Mademoiselle de Paroi, with whom I was very intimate, and Mademoiselle de Durfort, who was lively and very charming. Mademoiselle de Paroi was pretty, had a good figure, and played the harp like an angel; she was twelve years old. Mademoiselle de Broye, a little older, was rather pretty, and overflowing with wit.

"One may well say that all the gossip and all the news was chronicled in the sacristy. It was a general meeting-place for the whole blessed day. If any one was complaining, or

rejoicing, or had some event to relate, it was always to the sacristy that they came.

"The two vestry nuns were Madame de Granville and Madame de Tinel. Madame de Granville wished to teach me to embroider, for she herself embroidered most beautifully; but she never succeeded in teaching me. I therefore did no work, but was employed in folding and cleaning the vestments, and helping Madame de Saint Philippe to arrange the church.

"In the evenings at least twenty persons came to talk about what had taken place in the four corners of the establishment; but I did not remain there, for I used to go to Madame de Rochechouart's, where I always found Madame de Choiseul, Mesdemoiselles de Conflans, Madame de Sainte Delphine, Madame de Saint Sulpice, Madame de Saint Edouard, and the best society. Madame de Sainte Delphine, sister to Madame de Rochechouart, was generally stretched out, with her feet upon a chair, beginning purses,

of which she never finished one; I had much amusement in listening to her, for she was very droll; and though Madame de Rochechouart's wit was more remarkable and striking, whereas Madame de Sainte Delphine's was often languid like her person, yet when roused she was very agreeable. Moreover, it is well known that wit is hereditary in the Mortemart family. Madame de Sainte Delphine was one of the prettiest women one could see; she was twenty-six years old, tall, with lovely fair hair, large blue eyes, the most beautiful teeth in the world, charming features, a fine figure, and a noble carriage. She suffered a great deal from her chest, was of an indolent character, and entirely dominated by her sister.

"Madame de Saint Sulpice was pretty, lively, and amiable; Madame de Saint Edouard pretty, amiable, and very romantic. We talked as freely as we pleased, and whatever was said, I never saw Madame de Rochechouart grow warm in discussing any

opinion. At the very utmost, she would throw ridicule on the matter—a talent in which she excelled, and against which it was difficult to hold one's own. New works were read that could without inconvenience be read by us. We chatted about all that took place in Paris; for the ladies spent their days in the parlour, where they received the very best company, and the young ladies went out a great deal, so everything was known.

"It was rare at Madame de Rochechouart's to hear any one speak ill of their neighbours, and even then it was always much more vaguely than in any of the other sets in the Convent. Yet her circle was the one most feared, for it was well known that every one there was witty, and superior to the rest. It was therefore looked upon as a kind of tribunal, whose criticism one dreaded to encounter. When, on leaving Madame de Rochechouart, I returned to the sacristy, Madame Saint Mathieu and Madame Sainte Ursule used to ask me: 'Well, what do

those exquisites say about us?'—'Nothing, Madame,' I could honestly reply; 'they did not mention you.' Then their astonishment was without end, for they themselves ran down the whole household all day long. I may say that Madame de Rochechouart, her sister Madame de Saint Sulpice, and several other ladies of their society, had an indifference amounting to contempt for anything that did not particularly concern them, and were always the last to become acquainted with the news of the Convent.

"It seemed to me that Madame de Rochechouart and her sister had a style of their own, and a manner that we all caught; I mean those of us whom she received. The women of the world were astonished at the style in which we expressed ourselves. Mademoiselle de Conflans, especially, never said anything like any one else; there was originality in her every word."

Madame de Rochechouart's society, the

advice, full of tact, and refinement that she gave these young girls, admirably adapted them for the part they were destined to fill in the highest ranks of society. In our free and easy days we cannot have the faintest conception of what was formerly considered good style and courteous manners, nor of the value that was set on all the different shades of good breeding. "Politeness, good taste, and style constituted a kind of truce that each one guarded with care, as if it had been confided to them only. Women especially were the chief supporters of this groundwork of all the charms of society."[1]

"I shall never forget what happened one day between me and Madame de Rochechouart. She had told me to come to her cell in the evening. So I went, and found her surrounded with papers, busily writing. I was not astonished, as she was in the habit of being so occupied; but what

[1] *Les Femmes*, by Vicomte de Ségur.

struck me was to see her look disconcerted and blush tremendously on my arrival. She told me to take a book and sit down.

"I therefore pretended to read, and watched her; she wrote with great agitation, rubbed her forehead, sighed, and looked around her with a fixed and absent look, as if her thoughts were a hundred leagues away.

"She often wrote like that for three consecutive hours; at the slightest sound she would give a start, which showed how absorbed she was, and seemed in a way almost angry at having been disturbed. On that day I so distinctly saw tears in her eyes that I could not help thinking that perhaps she was not happy. While pondering, I looked at her; she had a paper before her, her pen in hand, her mouth half open, her eyes looking fixedly before her, while her tears were flowing. I was so deeply affected that tears gathered in my eyes, and I was unable to suppress a deep sigh; this aroused Madame de Rochechouart, who raised her

eyes, and seeing me in tears immediately concluded I had noticed the state of anxiety she was in. She held out her hand to me, in a most expressive and touching manner, saying, 'Dear heart, what is the matter?' I kissed her hand and burst into tears; she questioned me again, and I confessed that the extreme agitation I had seen her in had led me to suppose that she was harbouring some sorrow, and that this was the cause of my being so affected. Then she folded me in her arms, and remained silent for a time, as though reflecting on what she would say. Then she said to me: 'I was born with a very vivid imagination, and in order to employ it, I hurriedly set down on paper all that it conceives. As among these fancies many are sad and melancholy, they often affect me keenly enough to make me shed tears. Loneliness and a life of contemplation keep up in me this propensity to give way to imagination.' The supper bell rang while we were still talking. We parted with

regret, and since then Madame de Roche-chouart's tenderness towards me increased twofold, and nothing could equal the tender interest I felt for her in return."

VI

The record office—Madame de Saint Germain and her rasp—The ballets *Orpheus* and *Eurydice*—The refectory—The gates and the tower—The community and the cellars—Story of Mademoiselle de Saint Ange—Madame de Sainte Delphine and the library.

"About this time I was removed from the sacristy and put into the record office. I cried a great deal when I was sent there, for all the nuns were old grumblers, with the exception of Madame de la Conception, who was of the Maillebois family; she had a dignified manner, and it was easy to see she was a lady of high birth. She knew everything connected with the Abbey, and it was a pleasure to listen to her anecdotes of former times at the monastery.

"Madame de la Conception had a mania for singing ballads; I never heard a more

nasal voice. She sang every day to us the ballads of *Judith*, of *Gabrielle de Vergy*, and many others. Sometimes, to amuse us, she would show us some curious things, for they possessed, among the records, letters from Queen Blanche, from Anne of Brittany, and from several other Queens of France, addressed to the Abbesses of the Convent. Letters from Guy de Laval to his aunt, the Abbess of the Abbaye-aux-Bois, written when he was with the army during the disturbances of Charles the Seventh's reign; La Hire and Dunois were mentioned in these letters, and several other interesting documents she showed us.

"The pupils at that time on duty at the record office[1] were Mademoiselle de Caumont, handsome, witty, but easily offended, aged thirteen; Mademoiselle d'Armaillé, fourteen

[1] This department consisted of a large hall, entirely fitted up with drawers for the archives; a second hall containing the library of the repository, and a room for the nuns in charge.

There were four ladies, two secretaries, six pupils, and two lay sisters.

years old, hideous, affected, but a good creature; Mademoiselle de Saint Chamans, ugly, with very short legs, quite out of proportion to her body, eighteen years old; Mademoiselle de Beaumont, ugly and lame, but a good soul; Mademoiselle de Sivrac, nineteen years of age, of noble appearance, but subject to spasms, and rather crazy; Mademoiselle de Lévis, kind, colourless, not clever, fourteen years of age.

"I have already mentioned Madame de Maillebois; the other nuns at the record office were: Madame de Saint Romuald, an old grumpy; Madame de Saint Germain, another old grumpy; Madame de Saint Pavin, forty-eight years old, who never spoke, and was very sly.

"We spent the whole day, Caumont and I, making fun of all these people. Madame de Saint Romuald was eighty years old, and Madame de Saint Germain seventy-five. They spent the whole day quarrelling, first about one thing and then about another; it

was really incredible. They were constantly making mistakes in their accounts, and always put the fault on each other. It was comical to see them, with their spectacles on, buried up to their noses in the large archive books. They spent their days reading either the old letters that former Abbesses of the Abbaye-aux-Bois had received, or else poring over the old lawsuits of those ladies, and if ever any one wished to know anything concerning the Abbey in former times, they never could tell a thing.

"On one occasion, Madame de Saint Romuald had lent a sugar rasp to Madame de Saint Germain, who either lost it or forgot she had had it. One Sunday, during High Mass, Madame de Saint Romuald remembers her rasp; and as these two centuries were seated side by side, Madame de Saint Romuald leans over to Madame de Saint Germain, and says in a low tone—

"'By the by, you have not returned me my rasp?'

"'What do you mean by your rasp?'

"'What! I did not lend you my rasp?'

"Madame de Saint Germain (annoyed at such a request in church)—

"'I have not got your rasp.'

"The other (getting angry and raising her voice)—

"'Give me back my rasp!'

"They continued so long and so loud that the pupils burst out laughing.

"Astonished at this, the Lady Abbess asked what had taken place; she was told; she sent word to the two ladies to be quiet, and she would send them each a rasp.

"When they returned to the office, they sulked at each other for a whole week, and whenever sugar or things lent were mentioned, Madame de Saint Romuald would at once relate the story of her rasp; how she had once had one, that she had lent it, and that it had been lost. Then Madame de Saint Germain would say that it was not true; and we often amused ourselves with

putting the conversation on this subject, so as to see them quarrel."

On leaving the record office Hélène went to the refectory department, where she spent two months. Her duties there consisted in waiting on the pupils at table, helping to lay the cloth, to keep the refectory in order, and to put away the glass and china, etc.—all useful acquirements for a future mistress of a household. However, although so busy in the refectory, Hélène did not neglect her accomplishments.

"At that time I danced in the ballets of *Orpheus* and *Eurydice;* we danced them in our theatre, which was a very fine one, and handsomely decorated; it was at the end of the garden, near the old plague-house.

We were in all fifty-five dancers. Mademoiselle de Choiseul danced as Orpheus, Mademoiselle de Damas as Eurydice, I as Cupid, Mesdemoiselles de Chauvigny and Montsauge were two attendants. There were ten dancers of the funeral entry, ten as

the furies, ten as Orpheus's followers, ten as Eurydice's, and ten for the Court of Love. That winter we also played *Polyeucte* in the Convent theatre. I took the part of Pauline, Mademoiselle de Châtillon was Polyeucte, and Mademoiselle de Choiseul, Sévère; it was a great success. Shortly after they made us study the *Cid*. I played Rodriguez, and also Cornelia, in the *Death of Pompey*."

These performances were so full of interest for the little actresses that they frequently devoted their recreation hours to the study of their parts. The audience was composed of the mothers and relations of the pupils, and their friends. And these plays were the talk of all Paris.

However, these worldly amusements did not interfere with the regular course of their duties.

"After the refectory," Hélène tells us, "I was a fortnight on service at the gate. There were five of us: Mademoiselle de Morard, fourteen years old, rather pretty, but stupid

and insipid; Mademoiselle de Nagu, aged seventeen, pretty and amiable; Mademoiselle de Chabrillan, ugly but clever, fourteen years of age; Mademoiselle de Barbantanne, fifteen years old, looking like a boy, a romp, pretty, and a very good dancer.

"Our duty was to accompany the portress whenever she went to open the outer gates.

"The movement was perpetual; at one moment the masters, then the doctors, or else the directors; in fact, Mesdames de Fumel and de Pradines, the two portresses, were completely tired out by the evening; we did not like the former—she was sour, dry, and ill-natured.

"The turning box,[1] where I was next sent, suited me better; we saw a number of people all day long; I was there with Aumont, Cossé, and Chalais, all very amiable young ladies.

"The two nuns in charge, Mesdames de

[1] There were two nuns at the turning box, and five pupils.

Calvisson and de Nogaret, were sisters; the latter was fond of reading, and very learned.

"We had to ring for every one who was wanted, and there was a different bell for each person. It was rather difficult not to make a mistake; for one, there would be 3, 8, and a peal; for another, V, 8, and a peal; it was endless.

"Aumont was eighteen years old, and was witty and talented; she was rather pretty, and had been married some time.

"Cossé was only twelve; she was plain, but full of charm, and very delicate; she married later the Duc de Mortemart.

"Madame d'Avaux, of whom I have already spoken, was good-natured and pretty, but silly.

"Lastly, Mademoiselle de Chalais, very pretty, fifteen years old, rather an invalid.

"This department amused us, but as the work was very fatiguing, no one ever remained there long.

"From the duties of the tower I passed on

to those of the community. I could have spent a long time in this department without feeling dull if only I had been left there. I was with Mademoiselle de Talleyrand, who was pretty, amiable, and very popular, and Mademoiselle de Périgord, her sister, also pretty; Mademoiselle de Duras, pretty, and rather amiable; and finally, Mademoiselle de Spinola, who was awkward, ill-natured, but very handsome.

"Among the ladies who attended to these duties was an old nun named Madame de Saint Charles; although seventy-five years old, she was lively, and nothing disturbed her; we might make any noise around her, she did not mind it. There were always about fifty people in the community-room, busy at all kinds of needlework. Talleyrand played the harpsichord and I the harp, and we sang; these concerts greatly amused the nuns.

"This room was hung all round with full-length portraits of the Abbesses of the Abbaye-

aux-Bois; nearly all of them had their coats of arms painted on an escutcheon at their feet. In this way one could tell who they were. Mother Saint Charles told us of an adventure that occurred during her novitiate, which I will relate here.

"On one occasion a certain Madame de Saint Ange came to propose her daughter as novice to Madame de la Trémouille, at that time Abbess of the Abbaye-aux-Bois. The young lady seemed of a gentle disposition, and, moreover, the mother offered a pension and dowry suitable for a girl of good family. She was therefore accepted, and entered the next day, and soon every one in the Convent was enchanted with her grace, her wit, and her gentleness. She was novice together with several others, including Madame de Saint Charles, who sometimes said to her: 'Mademoiselle de Saint Ange, it is incredible that a young lady so modest and well-bred as you are should have the gestures and manners that you sometimes have; for when you are

standing before the fireplace you spread your feet in an odd manner, and when you move up your chair you often seem about to take hold of it between your knees; in fact, it is extraordinary to see, in the same person, an air of modesty verging on constraint, occasionally combined with the gestures of a musketeer.' Mademoiselle de Saint Ange blushingly replied that she had been brought up with a brother, whose manners she used to copy as a child, and that she had never quite got rid of them.

"One night, during a terrible thunderstorm, Madame de Saint Charles, who at that time was Mademoiselle de Ronci, came and knocked at the cell of Mademoiselle de Saint Ange, and begged her to open the door.

"Mademoiselle de Saint Ange kept her waiting a few moments, and then opened. 'Ah,' said Mademoiselle de Ronci, 'I am horribly frightened in my cell; you must let me sleep in yours till the storm is gone by.' But

Mademoiselle de Saint Ange would not hear of it, telling her the holy rules forbade it, and begged her to go away. At last Mademoiselle de Ronci, seeing she was determined not to let her remain in her cell, went away, highly displeased at this want of good nature.

"When Mademoiselle de Saint Ange had been doing her novitiate for three months, her mother came one day to the Lady Abbess, to say that her daughter felt no longer any vocation for a religious life, and to beg that she might be restored to her. Mademoiselle de Saint Ange departed, to the grief of the whole Convent, who regretted her very much. Some days after, Madame de Saint Ange wrote to the Lady Abbess, to ask her pardon for the deception she had practised on her. She informed her that she had had in her establishment her son instead of her daughter. The young man having had the misfortune to kill his adversary in a duel, she had made him wear his sister's clothes, and had put him in the Abbaye-aux-Bois, that

being the only plan she could devise for sheltering him from the severity of the law.

"The Lady Abbess replied that since the thing was done, she congratulated herself that by this means the life had been saved of one who, during his stay in her house, had given her such a good impression of his character. Madame de Saint Charles told us that Mademoiselle de Saint Ange would often inadvertently speak of herself in the masculine gender.

"THE LIBRARY.

"At length I was sent to the library, to the great satisfaction of Madame de Mortemart. I was seated quietly reading in the kitchen when they came to tell me that I was appointed to the library. I quickly ran to find Madame de Sainte Delphine; as soon as she saw me she said: 'At last you come to me; I hope we shall spend our lives together.' Indeed I hardly left her; she was nearly always at her sister's and I with her.

"She took no more notice of what happened to the books than if they had not existed, and yet she was fond of reading; when she wanted a book she would ask Madame de Saint Joachim for it.

"Sometimes when she was in the library, and saw that when books were fetched or returned Madame de Saint Joachim noted them down, she would express her astonishment at so much trouble being taken.

"I spent the morning doing commissions for her, and generally went to her immediately after appearing before Madame de Rochechouart at morning class.

"After going to *prime*[1] she had gravely returned to bed, and thought no more of getting up; when I went in I used to say: 'Madame, it is half-past eight o'clock.'

"'Ah, good heavens, is it possible? I cannot believe it!'

"Sometimes Madame de Rochechouart, on

[1] Prime, a term of the Roman Catholic Liturgy, the first canonical hour succeeding lauds, beginning at six in the morning.

returning from the schoolroom, would come into her cell, and say: 'My sister, it is shameful for a nun to be still in bed.' Thereupon Madame de Sainte Delphine would reply: 'I have taken no vow not to sleep to my heart's content.' Madame de Rochechouart would then say: 'Well, Hélène, you must make my sister get up.' I would call Sister Leonard, then she would close her curtains, put on her chemise, and dress herself without doing her hair. She looked charming thus, when dressed, with her head still bare; she kept her hair rather long, for fear of catching cold; it was of the most beautiful colour. She next washed her head in tepid water, and put on her guimp and veil. 'Madame,' I would say, 'is there nothing you have forgotten?'—'No, nothing to-day.' But scarcely had she entered the library[1] when she exclaimed: 'Hélène, I have forgotten my hand-

[1] The library at the Abbaye-aux-Bois occupied three large halls, contained sixteen thousand volumes, and possessed a very complete collection of theological works.

kerchief.' I would run to fetch it ; sometimes it was one thing, sometimes another. She would keep me thus running about all the morning, but I was so fond of her that I did not mind it."

VII

Mademoiselle de Choiseul and her mother—Madame de Stainville's romantic adventures—Mademoiselle de Choiseul's wedding—Taking the veil.

"My intimacy with Mademoiselle de Choiseul increased day by day; we had everything in common, our books, our trinkets, and even the keys of our drawers and writing desks, were mutually in each other's possession.

"It happened about that time that Mademoiselle de Lévis[1] one day publicly taunted Mademoiselle de Choiseul before the whole class with the fact of her mother's being kept in confinement on account of her having been in love with an actor.

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[1] The Marquis de Lévis, her father, lieutenant-general in the king's army, had married Mademoiselle de la Reynière, daughter of the rich *fermier général* and of Mademoiselle de Jarente de la Brière.

"Mademoiselle de Choiseul, although very angry, was not disconcerted, and said: 'No; my mother lives in the country because she prefers it, at least that is what I have always been told. But if what you say be true, it will not be the most commendable action on your part to have enlightened me on the subject.'

"The whole class was exceedingly irritated with Mademoiselle de Lévis, and all the young ladies told her that her conduct was infamous; that no one could be reproached for a thing of that kind; that they were in despair at its having happened in their class; and that they would ask as a favour for her removal back into the blue class, in consideration of her own honour, since the more she was treated like a child the more excusable her behaviour would be.

"Then Mademoiselle de Lévis sought out Mademoiselle de Choiseul, who was in a corner of the classroom, and being mean-spirited, knelt down before her and begged her

not to repeat the story. All the young ladies of her class followed and hooted her. Mademoiselle de Choiseul replied aloud: 'Mademoiselle, all that I can do for you is not to mention your name, and I give you my word of honour that it shall not pass my lips; but I should be condemned for ever in the eyes of my companions if I appeared unconcerned after what you have told me in their presence, and if I did not seek information about my mother from my relatives.'

"At that moment a mistress, who had noticed during the last hour the disturbance amongst the pupils, came forward and asked what had happened. Mademoiselle de Choiseul said that she had had a dispute with one of the pupils, and that it was now over; the mistress asked if any one had a complaint to make, and as we remained silent she returned to her seat.

"Mademoiselle de Choiseul and I afterwards held a consultation, in order to see what steps she should take, and we decided that

she must speak of this event to Madame de Rochechouart.

"I asked Mademoiselle de Choiseul if she had had no suspicions of what she had been taunted with, and she said: 'No; I fancied that my mother was a peculiar woman, and was disliked by her family, and that was her reason for preferring to live in the country.' She also added: 'Neither my father[1] nor my uncle ever mention her to me, and when occasionally I have spoken of her, I noticed that the subject was distasteful; but now that I recall a host of things said before me, I am afraid what Mademoiselle de Lévis told me is true.' Then she added: 'I am suffocating, I feel an imperative need to weep, and am controlling myself here.' I went to Mother Quatre Temps and asked her to allow me to go to Madame de Rochechouart, as I had something to say to her, and she gave me

[1] Jacques de Choiseul, Comte de Stainville, youngest brother of the Duc de Choiseul. He became a Marshal of France, and died in 1789.

the permission. Mademoiselle de Choiseul, on her side, went to ask Madame de Saint Pierre, who, being very strict, replied that she might wait to see Madame de Rochechouart till the names were called over in the evening.

"Choiseul, who was very quick tempered, could bear it no longer, and burst into tears. Madame de Saint Pierre said she was out of temper, and ordered her to go and kneel down. She obeyed. All the pupils pitied her, and made much of her. They told Lévis that she was the cause of all this trouble; she had remained in a corner of the room, not daring to show herself. Mademoiselle de Choiseul said to me in a low voice: 'As you have permission, go to Madame de Rochechouart, tell her my trouble, and beg her to send for me; but do not mention Lévis, as I have promised not to do so.'

"I therefore ran off to Madame de Rochechouart. I did not find her in her cell,

but only Madame de Sainte Delphine, who said to me: 'Ah! it is you, my pussy. I am very glad to see you, for I was feeling as dull as a dog, waiting for my sister. Tell me something amusing, I beg of you, for I am in exceedingly low spirits.'

"Then I said to Madame de Sainte Delphine: 'Mademoiselle de Choiseul and I have something to tell Madame de Rochechouart, but she has not obtained permission to come; if you would be so kind as to send for her, by Sister Leonard, saying that Madame de Rochechouart asks for her, it would not be a lie, as it is also your name.' She consented, and shortly after Madame de Rochechouart came in.

"Mademoiselle de Choiseul arrived at the same moment, and we told Madame de Rochechouart what had taken place. She appeared most indignant. 'And who said such a thing?' she inquired. We absolutely refused to tell her. Thereupon Madame de Rochechouart, who did not wish to commit herself

with Mademoiselle de Choiseul, said: 'I have withdrawn myself from the world, and events of this kind do not reach us; but tell me which member of your family you wish me to write to, who may be able to give you some explanations.' Mademoiselle de Choiseul named her aunt, the Duchesse de Gramont.[1]

"Madame de Rochechouart accordingly wrote to her: she came the next day, and Mademoiselle de Choiseul having told her the cause of her trouble, Madame de Gramont replied: 'I do not wish to deceive you; you

[1] Beatrix de Choiseul-Stainville, born at Lunéville in 1730. She was Canoness of Remiremont, and had no other income but that derived from her prebendary. She was ambitious, and united to a stern and hard character a masculine intellect, capable of grappling with affairs and intrigues. She soon formed the project of ruling her brother, but for this purpose a great name and a large fortune were indispensable; moreover the man who would bring her these advantages was bound to be a mere cipher, in order not to overshadow the Duc de Choiseul. She found all these requisites united in the person of the Duc de Gramont, whom she married the 16th of August 1759. The Duchesse de Gramont's influence over her brother became absolute, to the great despair of the Duchesse de Choiseul, who was devoted to her husband, and found herself supplanted by her domineering sister-in-law.

are now growing up and cannot be left in a state of ignorance that might lead you to make injudicious remarks. It is quite true that your mother's misconduct has obliged her family to place her in a convent. You have a sister[1] who has been brought up in another convent, and who is coming to be with you at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. Your demeanour towards the pupils must be sufficiently authoritative to prevent any one broaching the subject in future, and above all, have no confidantes. You can easily imagine that this is not an agreeable topic of conversation for your father; do not therefore mention it to him, unless he be the first to speak to you.'

"Mademoiselle de Choiseul asked if she would not be allowed to write to her mother. Madame de Gramont said that she could not

[1] Thérèse Félicité de Choiseul-Stainville, born in 1767, married in 1782 the Prince Grimaldi-Monaco. From contemporary accounts she appears to have been pretty, and endowed with a captivating personality. She was guillotined in 1793.

take upon herself to give her that permission, but that she would speak of it to her family.

"Mademoiselle de Choiseul came and told me all this, and we agreed that we would appear to have forgotten what had taken place, and that if the others referred to it we should show our displeasure."

Unfortunately, Mademoiselle de Lévis's cruel gossip was but too well-founded, and the romantic adventures of Madame de Stainville, especially the final catastrophe, had created a great scandal.

When the Duc de Choiseul became war minister (at the death of the Maréchal de Belle-Isle) he had his brother, the Comte Jacques de Choiseul-Stainville, named lieutenant-general. The Count had no fortune; his family, wishing to secure for him a brilliant match, turned their thoughts to Mademoiselle Thérèse de Clermont-Revel, who was a great heiress, and endowed with a charming presence. The Duke cleverly conducted the negotiations, and the marriage was decided

upon. The Count was nearly forty years old, his betrothed was only fifteen, and had never seen her future husband. He obtained leave of absence, came to Paris, and *six hours after* his arrival the marriage was celebrated.[1]

The young Comtesse de Stainville was presented in society by her sister-in-law, the Duchesse de Choiseul, and created quite a sensation. She danced like an angel, and shone with grace and beauty. It was easy to suppose that before long she would receive attentions from the most fashionable men. Contemporary memoirs even pretend that her brother-in-law, the Duc de Choiseul, dared to hazard a declaration, which was badly received. It is said that Lauzun fared better, but this passing fancy was shortly superseded by another sentiment. It is well known how actors were then run after in society. Their conquests were innumerable. At that time Clairval was the actor most in vogue, and the

[1] The 3d April 1761.

favourite of all the ladies. He united to undoubted talent a handsome face, an elegant figure, and a natural audacity which nothing could check. He was not long in perceiving the impression that he had made on Madame de Stainville, and determined to risk all and take advantage of it. A lady's-maid and a footman were taken into the secret, and Madame de Stainville even went so far as to receive Clairval at her own residence.[1]

Some time passed: Madame de Stainville gave birth to a second daughter, and nothing foreshadowed the scandal that was about to take place; but the intimacy between Clairval and the Countess was gradually becoming known; the Duchesse de Gramont was the first to hear of it. She hated her young sister-in-law, and was not slow to inform her brother of the rumours which till then he had ignored.

The Count was away on military service

[1] She had left the Choiseul family mansion, and was living at No. 7 Rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré.

with the army, and was to return to be present at an entertainment in which all Paris was interested. The Maréchale de Mirepoix was preparing a wonderful fancy ball at the hôtel de Brancas. National dances were to be performed by twenty-four gentlemen and by as many ladies, in Chinese and Indian costumes. These were being rehearsed for the last week. "The guilty and unfortunate Madame de Stainville," says Madame du Deffand, "had Prince d'Hénin for a partner, and was present every day at these rehearsals. On Tuesday, two days before the ball, all the dancers were entertained at a supper given by the Duchesse de Valentinois; it was noticed that Madame de Stainville seemed very dejected and constantly had tears in her eyes. Her husband had arrived that morning." On the following day, Wednesday,[1] at three o'clock in the morning, Madame de Stainville was carried off in a post-chaise and conducted

[1] The 31st January 1767.

by her husband in person to the Convent of the *Filles de Sainte Marie* at Nancy. The Count had easily obtained a *lettre de cachet* through his brother, the Duke, and his wife was confined for the rest of her life. He returned her all her fortune, and had a trustee appointed, who was authorised to give the Countess everything she required, but not a farthing in money. A sum was devoted to his daughters' maintenance, and the remainder of her income put under sequestration for their benefit.

The lady's-maid was sent to the Salpetrière and the footman to Bicêtre, as a punishment for having aided in the affair. It was generally considered that M. de Stainville had inflicted on his wife a chastisement of unheard-of severity. In those days of easy morality it was not the custom to consider this sin as an unpardonable offence, and the beautiful Madame de Stainville excited a universal feeling of pity. It was even said that the Count's mistress, a young and

charming actress at the opera, notified to him on his return from Nancy that she would never see him again, for fear of being taken for an accomplice in such an iniquitous proceeding.[1]

Some time after this sad revelation, Mademoiselle de Choiseul, very much agitated, came to Hélène as she was leaving the parlour, and said to her: "Fancy, they are going to put my sister at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, and she will arrive next Monday. What distresses me is that she is simply sent to the dormitory, whilst I have my own apartment. This difference is certain to make the pupils talk."

Hélène advised her to say that it had been considered proper to make this difference on account of her being the eldest.

"She told me she was to go out the next day and make her sister's acquaintance, as she had never seen her.

[1] The time came, however, when, thanks to the efforts of the Duchesse de Choiseul, Madame de Stainville's home was again opened to her; but she refused to return, and died in the Convent, in great piety.

"She went out, accordingly, and as she was late in returning we were not able to talk together in private. But in the evening she came into my room, and told me that her sister was four years younger than herself, and a mere child; that she was rather pretty, but did not appear very lively, and she thought her ignorant and badly brought up; that she had made a great deal of her, but that she had appeared very untamed. She also told me that she was called Mademoiselle de Stainville. We decided to notice her a great deal, in order that no unpleasantness should occur when she was received."

She was brought to the Convent by Madame la Duchesse de Choiseul, who gave instructions that she should be appealed to for all requirements, being specially in charge, instead of her father or the Duchesse de Gramont, as was the case for Mademoiselle de Choiseul. It is evident that the kindness of the Duchesse de Choiseul did not belie itself, and that she was determined to act the part of a

mother to the forsaken child, whom every one seemed to repel.[1]

"Mademoiselle de Choiseul presented her to the class, saying that she was her sister, and that she begged every one to behave kindly towards her. Then Mesdemoiselles de Conflans, Mademoiselle de Damas, and myself, went up to her, and made a great deal of her, but she was very shy, and received us very coldly.

"As soon as she had made some acquaintances, Choiseul left her, and never became very intimate with her, for there was a great difference between the two sisters.

"When the Duc de Choiseul, Madame de Stainville, and Madame la Duchesse de Gramont came to see Mademoiselle de Choiseul, they never asked for Mademoiselle

[1] M. Durfort de Cheverny, in his *Memoirs*, says that the Duc de Choiseul having severely reprimanded his sister-in-law on account of her intimacy with Clairval, the Countess had solemnly declared that the child she had just given birth to was a legitimate daughter of the Count. (See the *Memoirs of the Comte Durfort de Cheverny*. Paris, 1886.)

de Stainville; but Mademoiselle de Choiseul insisted, and said she would not go down to the parlour if her sister was not also asked for; so they were obliged to see Mademoiselle de Stainville. It was the same thing about going out. Mademoiselle de Choiseul would never go by herself to the hôtel de Choiseul;[1] and all this was from a generous and kindly feeling, as she did not care for her sister, but she would not allow herself any distinction which might be to her disadvantage."

Mademoiselle de Choiseul's generous conduct under these circumstances proves a nobility of character most uncommon in a child of fourteen. No doubt the exalted

[1] The family mansion of the Choiseuls was at No. 3 Rue de la Grange Batelière, and occupied the site of the former Opera House. The gardens and outer buildings extended as far as the Rue Neuve Saint Augustin; the Opera Comique (burnt down in May 1887) was built on land belonging to the Duc de Choiseul. We can hardly realise at present the size and importance of the hôtels of the eighteenth century, many of which were regular palaces. The little hôtel of Madame de Gramont was next to her brother's.

opinion these young girls had of their rank and their birth contributed to develop sentiments of honour and refinement: they practised the axiom *noblesse oblige* to the full extent, and to say that they had a base mind was to them the bitterest reproach. But, at the same time, it must be acknowledged that they had the greatest contempt for any one who did not belong to their caste. Hélène expresses herself on this point in the most ingenuous manner.

"At one time," she tells us, "there was a breach in the walls of the Convent, while the garden wall was being rebuilt. It is the custom, whenever there is a breach in the enclosure, for the rules of seclusion to be set aside for as long a time as the breach lasts. This wall separated the Convent on one side from the street, whilst on the other side lay the Convent of the *Petites Cordelierès*, so that now, there being a way open, the nuns were able to visit each other.

"The Convent of the *Petites Cordelierès* was

neither as large nor as fine a building as ours. They only received about thirty pupils, but they were not young ladies of good birth, and they were very much embarrassed when they saw our numerous classes entirely composed of the daughters of the best families of France.

"At that time, on returning to the Convent one evening, Mademoiselle de Choiseul said she had a great event to tell me. She said she was going to marry the son of M. de Choiseul-La-Baume, who was only seventeen years old,[1] that he was very nice, that she would become the Duchesse de Choiseul-Stainville, and that the next day her family were coming to inform Madame

[1] Claude-Antoine-Gabriel de Choiseul-La-Baume, born on the 24th August 1760, was a son of the Marquis de Choiseul-Beaupré and Diane-Gabrielle de la Baume de Montrevel. He was brought up at Chanteloup, under the personal supervision of the Duc de Choiseul, his education having been begun by the Abbé Barthélemy. After the death of the Duc de Choiseul, who left no children, he inherited the title and peerage of that minister, in consequence of his marriage with his niece. The young Duke later on became governor of the Palace of the Louvre. He took an active share in the King's flight to Varennes, and died in 1838.

de Rochechouart and the Lady Abbess of the match, and she begged me to accompany her on her visits."

It was a time-honoured custom at the Abbaye-aux-Bois for the young girls personally to inform their companions of their marriage, and on this important occasion the betrothed was accompanied by her greatest friend. Hélène, delighted at playing such an important part, prepared herself to escort Mademoiselle de Choiseul with due solemnity the following afternoon.

"The next day, accordingly, in the morning, the Duc and Duchesse de Choiseul, Madame de Gramont, and M. de Stainville came to the Lady Abbess's parlour, and Madame de Rochechouart also came. They said that the settlements were to be signed at Versailles on the following Sunday; that on Monday the family and friends would sign them; that on Tuesday Mademoiselle de Choiseul would receive her wedding-gifts; and that on Wednesday she would leave for Chante-

loup,[1] where the marriage ceremony would take place; and that two days after she would be brought back to the Abbaye-aux-Bois, as she was only fourteen years of age. Directly her family had left I went with Mademoiselle de Choiseul all through the establishment, in order to announce her marriage. On Monday, the day on which the contract was signed, the whole class were looking out of the windows to see M. de Choiseul arrive, and he appeared to us very good-looking. All Paris was at the signing of the settlements. On leaving the parlour, Mademoiselle de Choiseul came to the window where the other pupils were, and M. de Choiseul on seeing her made her a low bow, which delighted us. She told us that her mother-in-law appeared very strict, and that it was said she was most difficult to get on with. The next day she received

[1] The ceremony took place on the 10th October 1778. The young Duchesse de Choiseul had two children: Etienne de Choiseul, a very distinguished young man, aide-de-camp to General Berthier, who was killed in the campaign in 1807, and a daughter, who married the Duc de Marmier, a peer of France.

a magnificent wedding-casket, bought at Mademoiselle Bertin's, a case of beautiful diamonds, jewels in blue enamelling, and a purse containing two hundred louis.[1]

"On the day of her departure Madame de Rochechouart allowed me to go out and breakfast with Madame la Duchesse de Gramont. Madame de Clermont brought me back.

"Mademoiselle de Choiseul gave me a keepsake made of gold and ornamented with hair, a bag, and a fan. She distributed forty bags and forty fans among the pupils.

"It had been proposed that her sister should not go to Chanteloup, but Mademoiselle de Choiseul complained so bitterly that Madame la Duchesse consented at last to take her. She gave her sister a beautiful diamond locket, and M. de Choiseul gave her a keepsake also mounted in diamonds.

"Mademoiselle de Choiseul, whom I shall

[1] One hundred and sixty pounds.

call Madame for the future, came back at the end of a fortnight. She told me all about the festivities given in her honour, but added that her mother-in-law had not let a single day pass without scolding her; as for her husband, she said she was madly in love with him, that he was lively and amusing, and that although they had never been left alone together he had managed to say a great many things to her, but that she had scruples about repeating them to me."

An event took place at this time which created a great impression on the young pupils at the Abbaye-aux-Bois. They were accustomed to be present at the ceremony of taking the veil, which was rather a frequent occurrence in the Convent. It seemed quite natural to them, and did not excite any painful emotion. This time, however, it was different.

"There had been for two years at the novitiate a young lady called Mademoiselle de Rastignac, who was twenty years of age.

She appeared absorbed in the deepest melancholy, was constantly ill, and spent most of her time in the infirmary. She had already adopted the nun's habit; and twice had been on the point of pronouncing her vows, but each time she fell ill, and the ceremony had to be put off. Her director, Dom Thémines, urged the indefinite postponement of her vows, and it was rumoured that she was being made a nun against her will. Once we spoke to Madame de Rochechouart about it, and she replied that she did not interfere in any way with the novices; but that if she thought she was being made to embrace a monastic life against her will she would not give her vote. Two or three times she was sent back to her family, so as to bring her once more into contact with the world, but in vain. At last a day was fixed for the final ceremony to take place, and it was said that although she was very ill, and could hardly stand, she wished to pronounce her vows.

On the day of her initiation all the

Hauteforts in the world filled the church, for she was their near relative. Mademoiselle de Guignes carried the wax taper and acted as her godmother; the Comte d'Hautefort was her squire. She was very pretty. First she went to the outer church and knelt down on a praying chair. Her dress was white crape, embroidered with silver and covered with diamonds. She bore up very well during the address from the Abbé de Marolle, in which he told her it was a great merit in the sight of God to renounce the world, when one was made to be loved and be the charm and ornament of society. It seemed as if he took pleasure in painting a glowing picture of all that she was going to give up; but she bore it with a firm countenance.

"After the address the Comte d'Hautefort took her hand and led her to the cloister door. As soon as she had entered it was closed upon her with a great crash—it is a way they have on these occasions. We all remarked that she turned very pale. She entered the court

more dead than alive. It was said that she was ill, but it seemed to us as if her mind suffered more than her body. When she reached the choir gates they were closed, while she was undressed and her worldly ornaments taken from her. She had long fair hair; when it was let down we were all on the point of crying out to prevent its being cut off, and all the pupils exclaimed under their breath, 'What a pity!' At the moment when the mistress of the novices put her scissors to it she gave a start. They laid her hair on a large silver platter; it was lovely. Then they clothed her in the dress of the order, put on the veil, and a wreath of white roses, after which the grating was opened, and she was presented to the priest, who blessed her.

"An arm-chair was then placed near the grating for the Lady Abbess, who seated herself, with her cross-bearer and her chaplain on either side. Mademoiselle de Rastignac knelt down before her, and put her hands in hers. The formula used on taking the vows

is as follows : ' I take the vow before God, and at your hands, Madame, of poverty, humility, obedience, chastity, and perpetual reclusion, according to the rule of Saint Benoit, as observed by Saint Bernard, in the order of Cîteaux and the affiliation of Clairvaux.' She was so weak that she could hardly support herself on her knees. The mistresses of the novices, Madame de Saint Vincent and Madame Saint Guillaume, were behind her. She seemed to have a veil over her eyes, and hardly to know where she was ; Madame de Saint Vincent said the words of the vow, and she repeated them after her. When she had pronounced the vow of obedience and came to the vow of chastity, she made so long a pause that all the pupils, who till then had been crying, could hardly refrain from laughing. She looked on every side, as if for help, so at last the mistress approached her and said : ' Come, take courage, my child ; accomplish your sacrifice !' She gave a deep sigh at the words ' of chastity and perpetual

reclusion,' and at the same moment her head drooped on the knees of the Lady Abbess. It was seen that she had fainted, and she was taken to the sacristy.

"It is the custom that, after pronouncing her vows, she should go and kiss the knees of all the nuns, and embrace the pupils. But it was said she was not well enough, and that she would only come and prostrate herself in the centre of the choir. Nothing has ever affected me more than seeing her appear at the door of the sacristy, pale as death, her eyes dim, and supported by two nuns. Mademoiselle de Guignes, who carried her taper, was trembling so violently that she could scarcely walk. Madame Sainte Madeleine, for that was the name Mademoiselle de Rastignac had taken, advanced to the centre of the choir, where they helped her to prostrate herself. She was covered with the pall; the *Miserere* of La Lande was sung. We also sang it, as well as the *Dies Iræ* and the *Libera* of the *Cordeliers*, which

is beautiful. It took altogether an hour and a half, as the prayers for the dead were said over her, to remind her that she was dead to the world. The same evening she had an attack of fever, and was taken to the infirmary, where she remained for six weeks. When she left it she was appointed to the refectory, but she has not recovered her health. She remains in a state of languor which causes everybody to take an interest in her, and each one seeks to cheer her, trying to make her life as agreeable as possible."

VIII

Madame d'Orléans, Abbess of Chelles—A visit from the Archbishop—The Jansenist nuns—The dispensary—Madame de Rochechouart's fête day—Her illness and death.

In the extensive building of the Abbaye-aux-Bois there was one apartment which was rarely opened. It had formerly been occupied by Madame d'Orléans, better known under the name of the Abbess of Chelles.[1] From her youth she had been destined to the cloister, which certainly was not her vocation. After a short novitiate she pronounced her vows, and was named Abbess of the Abbaye-

[1] Louise-Adélaïde de Chartres, grand-daughter of Louis XIV. and of Madame de Montespan, second daughter of the Regent Philippe d'Orléans, and of Mademoiselle de Blois, born the 13th August 1698, died the 20th February 1743. She was eighteen years of age when she became Abbess of the Abbaye-aux-Bois, and one-and-twenty when made Abbess of Chelles. (*Vide* the Correspondence of Madame la Duchesse d'Orléans née Princesse Palatine.)

aux-Bois. Her remarkable beauty recalled that of her grandmother, Madame de Montespan, but her haughty and violent temper and ungovernable passions soon made her the terror and shame of the Convent, and at the time that Hélène was writing the end of her *Memoirs* Madame d'Orleáns' apartment was still a source of dread to the pupils.

"It was asserted," says Hélène, "that shrieks and sounds of beating, and the rattle of chains, could be heard in the Orléans' apartment, and it was said that Madame d'Orléans' soul came back there in order to expiate all the evil she had done during her lifetime.

"People were so afraid of these rooms that they never entered them except a number at a time; and Sister Huon, having once gone in alone to sweep, found marks of blood in the bedroom, and was nearly suffocated by a strong smell of sulphur. She immediately fetched some of the others, but they saw nothing.

"When this apartment has to be cleaned, which is only twice a year, for no one ever occupies it, five or six people go in at the same time to sweep. There are I know not how many rooms of an immense size, all opening into each other, and it is dangerous to be there alone. The apartment is only opened for strangers, to show them the ceilings, which are beautifully painted, and the magnificent high warp tapestry on the walls, representing the histories of Esther and Judith. It is said that these tapestries are the finest the Gobelin manufactory have ever produced."

Madame d'Orléans had left cruel memories of her stay at the Abbaye-aux-Bois.

"It was said," continues the young Princess, "that in the time of Madame d'Orléans, who was a monster of cruelty, she had caused some of the nuns to be nearly beaten to death; others she had had shut up; and sometimes she made them chant the services the whole night through.

"Meanwhile M. le Régent would come to her rooms, and she would spend the night in laughing and amusing herself, eating and perpetrating all sorts of follies before the young nuns she had chosen as her companions. She said that she made the ladies spend their nights in prayer in order to expiate the sins she committed. It is also said that she used to take off all her clothes, and send for the nuns to admire her, for she was the most beautiful woman of her time. She took baths of milk, and the next day had it distributed among her nuns at the refectory, ordering them by their vows of obedience to drink it.

"At last her excesses reached such a point that the nuns made a formal complaint, and they were told she would be transferred to the Abbaye of Chelles.

"M. le Régent came himself to bring her the king's commands, and told her that 'she had so persecuted her unfortunate nuns that their complaints had reached the ear of the king; and that, notwithstanding his tender-

ness for her, he felt compelled to move her to another abbey, for the public feeling would be aroused if he did not do justice to these ladies.' Then Madame d'Orléans was in despair; she wept, she implored her father to let her remain at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, and promised that henceforth her rule should be as gentle as it had hitherto been cruel and despotic. But the Regent was inexorable, and told her she must be ready to leave for Chelles in a few days. When she saw that she could not win him over, she called the Chapter together, and going down on her knees before the nuns, entreated them to petition Government in her behalf, promising them that they should never again have to complain of her conduct.

"The Prioress at that time was a Madame de Noailles. She came forward and said these words, which have been repeated to us a hundred times: 'We have borne without murmuring, Madame, the cruel penalties you inflicted upon us. Blindly submissive to your

will, we only saw in our sufferings the hand of God laid heavily upon us. The respect which we have for you, and our attachment to the family you belong to, make us feel that it is a great misfortune not to end our days under your rule. But, in the same way that we should have been to blame had we refused to accept the afflictions God sent us, so likewise it would be tempting Providence if we sought the storm when it pleases Him to restore us to peace. We trust that you will find happiness where you are destined to live, and this, Madame, will be the object of our prayers and supplications.'

"Madame d'Orléans, seeing by this speech and the attitude of the nuns that she had nothing to hope for from them, got up like a fury and returned to her rooms.

"A few days later M. de la Tourdonnet, secretary for the commands of the Regent, and Madame la Duchesse de Villequier, came to tell her that her father's carriages were ready, and that she must leave for Chelles;

but she declared she would not go. In vain Madame la Duchesse de Villequier tried every form of persuasion, she could not prevail on her to leave. So they returned to M. le Régent, who said 'that when gentle measures failed, strong ones must be used.' He then sent with M. de la Tourdonnet and Madame de Villequier his captain of the guards, M. de Lyonne, and two officers; and Madame d'Orléans was informed that these persons had orders to put her in the carriage. When she heard this, she completely undressed herself, got into bed, sent for M. de Lyonne, and asked who would be bold enough to lay hands on a daughter of the royal blood of France. M. de Lyonne, much embarrassed, returned to M. le Régent, who sent Madame la Princesse de Conti with orders to try and call his daughter to reason, and if she did not succeed to have her wrapped up in her mattresses and carried away. So Madame la Princesse de Conti came, and by tears and entreaties at length

prevailed on her to leave. She was conducted to Chelles, a distance of four leagues from Paris, where she retained the title of Lady Abbess, but without any authority. Some time after, the Abbey of Saint Anthony of Paris becoming vacant, she asked for it, and it was granted to her, but under the same conditions, namely, that she should have merely an honorary title. She died a few years later, and asked to be buried at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, which request was granted. Her body lies in the choir, under a mausoleum of white marble.[1]

"There was in the Abbaye-aux-Bois, over the fireplace in the Community Hall, a very fine portrait of Madame d'Orléans. She was represented standing, with crowns and sceptres trampled beneath her feet; in one hand

[1] Hélène's account differs from that of Madame, the Regent's mother. She was fond of her grand-daughter, and does not describe her in such dark colours. She never mentions her stay at the Abbaye-aux-Bois, and only speaks of her installation at Chelles. The perfect accuracy of those portions of Hélène's narrative which we have been able to verify gives great weight to her account of the facts.

holding a crucifix, and with the other taking from an altar a crown of thorns. A peculiarity of this picture was, that though she was dressed as a nun, her feet were bare."

It hardly seems likely that the Abbess of Chelles would have busied herself with theological discussions. She, however, professed very decided Jansenist opinions. Her father the Regent strongly supported the Jansenists, out of opposition to the Court party, who belonged to the opposite sect; he probably inculcated his ideas to his daughter, and either under the influence of their Abbess, or that of their directors, the Abbaye-aux-Bois had become entirely Jansenist. The nuns expressed their opinions so openly that the Convent was put under an interdict during the last years of Madame de Richelieu's rule. However, they got back into favour, and Monseigneur de Beaumont,[1] who was the avowed enemy of the

[1] Christophe de Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, Peer of the Realm, *Duc de Saint Cloud* (this latter title belonged to that of the

Jansenists, consented to give confirmation to the young pupils of the Abbaye-aux-Bois in the year 1777. Hélène gives a faithful account of this event, which agitated the whole Convent, and not one detail of which escapes her keen observation.

"I was at that time being prepared for my confirmation, for I was to be confirmed at Whitsuntide.

"His Grace the Archbishop was to come that day, and as Mother Quatre Temps was supposed to be very Jansenist, I bethought myself to say, in order to please her, that I feared his Grace the Archbishop, instead of confirming me in the Holy Spirit, would confirm me in the evil one. Instead of scolding me, Mother Quatre Temps laughed extremely at this joke, and, delighted at

Archbishopric of Paris). His archbishopric brought him in a hundred and eighty thousand francs a year, and he had in his gift four hundred and ninety-two livings. This prelate, whose conduct towards the Jansenists was so harsh and even sometimes so violent, was admirable in private life for his gentleness, his equanimity of character, and for his liberality. Born the 26th July 1703 in the Château de la Roque, in Périgord, he died on the 12th December 1781.

having said such a witty thing, I went and repeated it all over the house. Mother Saint Ambrose, regent of the abbey-house, held very strong Molinist opinions, and when my joke came to her ears she complained to Madame de Rochechouart, who sent for me and rated me soundly. She decided that I should not be confirmed then, and I was only confirmed the following year. I took at my confirmation the names of Alexandrienne-Emanuelle. On Whitsunday, after having officiated at Mass and confirmed the pupils, His Grace the Archbishop entered the Abbey. The Lady Abbess, with her crozier and all the community, received him at the gate, and he visited all the establishment, even the schoolrooms. It is the custom for all the nuns to come forward, one after the other, and kiss his episcopal ring, but many of them avoided doing so. I even saw several, who, carried away by party feeling, stood behind his back and put out their tongues at him. He went into the library, which is very fine;

it consists of three rooms opening into each other containing thirty thousand volumes, and some very curious manuscripts. It is said that the nuns possess Jansenius's writings in the original edition, but they are not in the library, and are no doubt carefully concealed. When his Grace the Archbishop came to the library he sat down. Madame Sainte Delphine, who was head librarian, did the honours of the place. He was shown some handsome books, bound in vellum and ornamented with miniatures. He saw that some of the presses had their curtains drawn, and inquired what was in them. He was told that they contained romances and books on literature. He desired to see them, so the presses were opened and he admired the beauty of the editions, amongst others *The Romance of the Rose* and the *Holy Grail*, which had magnificent miniatures. He asked how it came that books of that kind formed part of a convent library, for they had certainly not been purchased. Then Madame

Sainte Delphine replied that formerly a great many people had on their death bequeathed their libraries to the Convent; that Madame d'Orléans had for her part given hers, which contained a great many books of this kind. Passing on to the shelves where the works of Nicole, Arnaud, Pascal, and other Fathers of Port Royal were ranged, the Archbishop said: 'These have turned many a brain, and will turn many more.' On passing the division containing the works of the Fathers of the Church, he remarked that many shelves were empty, and asked the reason. Madame Sainte Delphine said that several of the ladies had got the books. He expressed his surprise that women should take pleasure in reading scholastic works written in Latin, and said: 'I am not astonished at my curates telling me that they are a better match for the doctors of the Sorbonne than for the ladies of the Abbaye-aux-Bois.' He asked laughingly where Jansenius and the writings of Father Quesnel were usually

kept. Madame Sainte Delphine replied that those books were not in the catalogue which was under her charge.

"Then he inquired whether she had ever seen these works in the house. She replied that for some years past they had been so questioned about this Jansenius that, even if they had not possessed his works, they would have tried to procure them, as it is against all conscience to speak evil of a person unless you are certain that he deserves it; and that it could only be the obligation under which they were to answer questions which made them read works so far from entertaining as those of Jansenius. After this the Archbishop left. Two days later he sent his curates, who had all the theological books returned to the library, locked up the shelves, and sealed them with the Archbishop's seal, which the ladies were forbidden to remove. The ladies then said that in the interior of their establishment they recognised no authority but that of the Abbot of Cîteaux or Clairvaux, their

superior. They wrote to him on the subject; he immediately sent two visitors of the order, who complained to his Grace the Archbishop, telling him that his authority could only be exercised with regard to the steps the nuns might take outside their Convent, but that the interior was under the sole jurisdiction of Cîteaux or Clairvaux.[1] As his Grace the Archbishop was afraid the affair might be brought before Parliament, he sent to remove the seals; then the visitors assembled the Chapter. I do not know what took place; I only know that when they separated they left the Abbey as well pleased with the nuns as the nuns were with them. Shortly after the Abbot of Clairvaux sent an immense quantity of Burgundy wine as a present to the Convent.

"We resolved at that time to give a

[1] By the agreement signed between the Pope Leon X. and Francis I. the nominations to all the Abbeys of France belonged to the King, with the exception of those of Cluny, *Cîteaux*, Prémontré, and Grandmont, which were reserved and their abbots appointed by the Pope.

performance in honour of Madame de Rochechouart, on her fête or Saint's Day, which was the 15th of August, Mary being her name. We wanted to get it up with more care than usual, so that it might be a success. So we acted *Esther*. I took that part. Mademoiselle de Choiseul was Mordecai, Mademoiselle de Châtillon Ahasuerus, and Mademoiselle de Chauvigny was Haman. Our costumes were copied from those of the *Comédie Française*. I had a white and silver dress, the skirt of which was fastened with diamonds from top to bottom; I had on more than one hundred thousand écus'[1] worth of diamonds, having all those of Mesdames de Mortemart, de Gramont, and of Madame la Duchesse de Choiseul. It was the Vicomtesse de Laval who dressed me. I had a mantle of pale blue velvet and a gold crown. All the pupils in the chorus had white muslin dresses and veils. Before the

[1] An écu was worth five shillings.

play, still wearing the simple costume of the Convent, I advanced and pronounced the following words :—

"Nous sommes en un lieu par la grâce habité,
Où l'on vit dans la paix et la tranquillité.
L'innocence, qui fut leur compagne éternelle
S'y plaît et n'eut jamais d'asile plus fidèle.

"À Madame de Rochechouart.

"Tout un peuple naissant est formé par vos mains.
Vous jetez dans son cœur la sémence féconde
Des vertus dont il doit sanctifier le monde.
Ce Dieu qui vous protège, ici du haut des cieux
A commis à vos soins ce dépôt précieux.
C'est lui qui rassembla ces colombes timides
Afin que vous soyez leur secours et leur guide.

We live in a place where grace inhabits,
Where one dwells in peace and tranquillity.
And innocence, their eternal companion,
Is happy in this her safest refuge.

To Madame de Rochechouart.

An entire people is formed by your hands.
You sow in its heart the fruitful seed
Of virtues which will sanctify the world.
God, who from the heavens protects you here
Has committed this precious charge to your care.
It is He who gathered these doves together
For you to be their guide and their succour.

Grand Dieu que ses bienfaits aient place en ta mémoire!
Que les soins qu'elle prend pour soutenir ta gloire,
Soient gravés de ta main au livre où sont écrits
Les noms prédestinés de ceux que tu chéris!
Tu m'écoutes, ma voix ne t'est point étrangère,
Je t'implore souvent pour celle qui m'est chère;
Elle-même t'envoie ses plus tendres soupirs;
Le feu de ton amour allume ses désirs.
Le zèle qui l'anime au lever de l'aurore,
Au coucher du soleil, pour toi l'enflamme encore.
Tu la vois tous les jours donner de grands exemples,
Baiser avec respect le pavé de tes temples.
O vous, qui vous plaisez aux folles passions
Qu'allument dans vos cœurs de vaines fictions
Profanes amateurs de spectacles frivoles
Dont l'oreille s'ennuie au son de mes paroles,

Great God! may her goodness be remembered by Thee!
May the care with which she supports Thy glory
Be engraved by Thy hand in the book where are written
The predestined names of those Thou dost cherish!
Thou will'st hearken to my voice, it is not strange to Thee,
Oft I implore Thee for her who is dear to me;
She herself gives Thee her tenderest sighs;
The fire of Thy love is all her desire.
The zeal which fills her at rise of dawn
Still flames for Thee at set of sun.
Thou dost see her each day give great examples,
Kiss with respect the pavement of Thy temples.
Oh you who rejoice in mad passion,
Aroused in your heart by vain fictions,
Profane admirers of frivolous shows,
Whose ear is wearied with the sound of these words,

Fuyez de nos plaisirs la sainte austérité :
Tout respire ici Dieu, la paix, la vérité.[1]

Flee from our pleasures full of saintly austerity :
All here breathes of God, of peace, and pure verity.

"I cried towards the end, and Madame de Rochechouart also. The chorus was sung and a ballet was danced while I dressed. After the performance, as soon as she saw me, Madame de Rochechouart held out her arms to me; I rushed into them, and she folded me to her heart. She did not hide her great partiality for me.

"I was so happy at that time that I should have been glad for it to last for ever. I had at last been appointed to the dispensary,[2] which had been the summit of my ambition, and I lived there very pleasantly. I was with Madame de Choiseul, Mesdemoiselles de Conflans, Mademoiselle de Montsauge,

[1] This curious mixture of the prologue of *Esther* and other lines of Racine was arranged by M. de la Harpe.

[2] The dispensary. This department consisted of—(1) A large room lined with shelves on which were the medicines; (2) Two immense rooms with two chimneys and four alembics.

and Mademoiselle de Damas, all of whom were pretty and amiable.

"Among the nuns Madame de Saint Côme was a person of rare amiability; Madame de Saint Laurent, who was of the Cossé family, was witty and scatterbrained. Madame Sainte Marguerite, who was only sixteen years old, had just taken her vows, and thought only of amusing herself. Madame Sainte Véronique was a ridiculous old woman, without a particle of common sense, and that in itself was a source of amusement. Madame de Saint Côme taught us botany; she taught us to know all the different plants and their virtues. In the evening we went to Madame de Rochechouart's. I would have liked to have spent my life in that way.

"I have said that there were six of us in the dispensary. Here are our portraits, all faithful likenesses: Madame la Duchesse de Choiseul, fifteen years old, married, pretty, amiable, bright, witty, but satirical, violent, and hot-tempered. Mademoiselle Hélène

Massalska (myself), fourteen years old, pretty, clever, graceful, stylish, a good figure, as stubborn as the Pope's mule, and incapable of controlling her first impulse. Mademoiselle de Damas,[1] pretty, most graceful, but with more jargon than wit, sixteen years of age. Mademoiselle de Montsauge, the most beautiful eyes in the world, but with a dark complexion, gentle, witty, fifteen years old. Mademoiselle de Conflans,[2] rather pretty, remarkably brilliant and full of wit, aged fifteen. Her sister, Mademoiselle de Vaudreuil, was not pretty; she tried to copy her sister, but was far from being so clever.

"One morning, Madame de Rochechouart said to me: 'Hélène, come to me at six o'clock; I want to speak to you.' I went there-

[1] Mademoiselle de Damas was the sister of the Comte Royer de Damas, of whom we shall speak later on. The Damas family showed the greatest devotion to the cause of King Louis XVIII. during the emigration.

[2] Afterwards Marquise de Coigny, one of the wittiest ladies of the Court of Louis XVI.

fore, according to the order I had received; but she only said to me: 'My dear child, I am very sorry, but I cannot talk to you now; my head is burning, and I feel feverish; you must go away, and I must go to bed.' I returned to the dispensary, which was my department, and said that I had found Madame de Rochechouart ill. As this was very seldom the case with her, Madame de Ferrière and Madame de Cossé, the second and third dispensary nuns, went to her immediately. When Madame de Ferrière returned she told us she had found Madame de Rochechouart in a high fever. We were all seized with the greatest apprehension; on going to the refectory we carried the news to all the class, and the consternation was general. After supper Sister Léonard, who waited on Madame de Rochechouart, came with a message from her to say our names would not be called over; and we went sorrowfully to bed. The next day, on going down to the schoolroom, we were told that the fever had

increased, and that Madame de Rochechouart was going to be taken to the infirmary. Then we all burst into tears; Madame de Choiseul, Mesdemoiselles de Conflans, myself, and a few others were in dreadful grief. The Duchesse de Mortemart[1] came in the afternoon, bringing with her Bouvart[2] and Lorry.[3] The same evening Madame de Rochechouart

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[1] Charlotte de Manneville, Dowager-Duchess of Mortemart, sister-in-law to Madame de Rochechouart.

[2] Bouvart (Mich.-Ph.), born at Chartres, 11th January 1711, died the 19th January 1787. He was professor at the College of France, and a great enemy of the system of inoculation; he is supposed to have been the author of the act of accusation brought against Joly de Fleury for this innovation. "This Bouvart," writes Grimm, "a legalised assassin in the streets of Paris, is only too glad, by way of pastime, to insult his fellow-members, and even to get up some little criminal cases against them. It is he who attacked Tronchin, accused Bordeu of stealing a watch and sleeve-links off a dead body, and who fought with Petit." It is certain that Bouvart was detested by all his colleagues, but at the same time he was the most fashionable medical man in Paris.

[3] Lorry (Anne-Charles), President of the Faculty of Paris, born the 10th October 1726, at Crosne, near Paris, died at Bourbonne les Bains the 18th September 1783. His character formed a striking contrast with that of Bouvart. His gentleness, kindness, and the compassionate interest he took in his patients, brought him great success. Hating discussions, he was occasionally reproached with giving way too readily to the opinions of his fellow-doctors. He never aimed at making a fortune, and died poor.

became delirious, and remained in that state till the eve of her death.

"Meanwhile, the masters were dismissed, we left off playing at any games, and were in a state of utter despair. Every hour one of the pupils went to ask for news at the infirmary. The Lady Abbess went herself every day to see her. The Duc de Mortemart and his brother were admitted.[1] The Duchesse de Mortemart remained day and night by her beside. Mademoiselle de Mortemart seemed sad, but less afflicted than we were: it is true that her aunt had never cared much for her. At last, after eleven days of continuous fever, the doctors declared that she could not recover, and that the Sacraments must be administered as soon as she should become conscious.

"The following day, the twelfth of her

[1] Victorien-Jean-Baptiste-Marie de Rochechouart, born 8th February 1752, died 14th July 1812. He had married Mademoiselle de Cossé-Brissac. His brother, the Marquis de Rochechouart, born in 1753, died in 1823.

illness, towards the morning, she appeared to recover consciousness. She was asked, by way of precaution, if she would not receive the Sacraments, and she made a sign of assent. They were therefore administered, and although it is the custom for the pupils to assist at these ceremonies from the passage of the infirmary, as it was feared that our cries might be heard from her room, and that some of us might try to see her, we were conducted during that time to the choir.

"At night her agony began; but they did not toll the bell, as is customary at such moments, partly because of the pupils, and also on account of Madame Sainte Delphine, who had fallen into a state of stupor. From the moment she had seen her sister's illness take a fatal turn she had not left the foot of her bed, but after the Sacraments had been administered, the Duchesse de Mortemart conferred in a low voice with the Lady Abbess, and told Madame Sainte Delphine that she begged her not to spend the night in the infirmary.

The Lady Abbess told her she insisted on her going, and gave orders to Madame Saint Sulpice not to leave her. So she was taken to the dispensary, where we all, belonging to that department, spent the night in weeping.

"The Lady Abbess was informed, as she requested, that Madame de Rochechouart was at the point of death. Her confessor, Dom Thémines, had not left her side. The Duchesse de Mortemart was in the Abbess's rooms, for she would not leave the Convent. When they came to call the Lady Abbess she begged to go with her, but the Lady Abbess implored her not to come, and she sent word to the Duc de Mortemart to come immediately. He arrived, having on the previous day asked for a permission from his Grace the Archbishop to take Madame Sainte Delphine away from the Convent if her sister died. At about eight o'clock in the morning Madame de Rochechouart, who had not spoken a word since the Sacraments had been administered, asked for her sister.

They told her that she was not there, but that they would fetch her.

"'Raise my pillows,' she said. Madame de Verrue and Madame de Domangeville, first and second infirmary nuns, did so; then she took hold of Madame de Verrue's arm, and said: 'Oh, what pain! I am dying!' and she expired. The class had just come down, and Madame de Royer had said that Madame de Rochechouart was not dead, so that we did not know but what there might still be hope. As soon as she had expired, the Lady Abbess left the infirmary, in order to convey the intelligence to Madame la Duchesse and her son. The Duchess fainted away. When she came to herself again they said there was nothing else to do but to put Madame Sainte Delphine in a carriage and take her away. So a carriage with six horses was sent for; when it arrived, Madame de Mortemart went to the dispensary, where Madame Sainte Delphine had remained, as yet unconscious of her sister's death. Madame de Mortemart told

her nothing, but simply gave her the Archbishop's permit to remain three months out of the Convent. Madame Sainte Delphine immediately understood what that meant, and had a violent attack of hysterics. At last they managed to put her into the carriage, and convey her into the country at Everli, where she spent one month. The other two she spent at Paraclet, with her sister, and then returned to the Abbaye-aux-Bois.

"The Lady Abbess sent Madame de Villiers with orders to Madame de Royer to announce the news to the pupils, but we already suspected it. She came forward, when each of us had taken our places, and said: 'Young ladies, it has pleased God to recall to Himself our beloved Madame de Rochechouart. Offer up to Him the sacrifice of your legitimate grief, and pray for the repose of her soul.' Then we asked to be taken to the choir, where we recited the prayers for the dead.

"We had been so deeply attached to the

person of Madame de Rochechouart that we obtained permission not to appear in the schoolroom either that day or the next, on which she was to be buried.

"The class did not follow her funeral, but passed the time in prayer. She was to have been buried in the cloister, as all the nuns are, but the family requested that the body should be placed in one of the chapels of the choir, which was accordingly done. A slab of black marble covers her tomb. Each pupil had two Masses said for her soul, and she had a magnificent funeral at the expense of her family.

"It now became necessary to elect another mistress-general, but nobody wished to take the office, each one dreading the comparisons which would be made by the pupils. Some of them wished to have Madame de Royer, but she would not accept. We wanted Madame Sainte Delphine, but she was certainly not equal to the work; she was far too indolent.

"At last, on the day fixed for the meeting of the Chapter to decide on the appointment, a novice came at three o'clock from the community, to tell the class that the ladies begged us to pray that the light of the Holy Ghost might guide them in the choice they were about to make of a mistress-general. We immediately all knelt down, and after a short silence sang the *Veni Creator*.

"At six o'clock the Lady Abbess came to the schoolroom; we placed ourselves in our stalls, and she addressed us as follows: 'Young ladies, I have come to express to you my grief at the loss we have sustained, and at the same time inform you that the ladies have endeavoured to retrieve it as far as in them lay. They have elected Madame de Voyers, second mistress of the novices, in the place of Madame de Rochechouart.' We made no reply to the Lady Abbess, but merely bowed, and she left the room.

Shortly after Madame de Voyers, conducted by Madame de Royer, came in; she had a fine

figure, and enjoyed much consideration in the novitiate. She was about forty years of age. She said : 'Young ladies, I feel that my presence here can hardly be agreeable to you. I know how difficult is the task that lies before me. I pray you to make it easier by placing your confidence in me. The regrets that you rightly accord to the memory of Madame de Rochechouart are a credit both to you and to her ; I cannot flatter myself that I shall worthily replace her, but I ask you to rest assured that I shall make every effort to do so.'

"This little speech, made with much sincerity of manner, touched us ; we applauded vehemently, and asked permission to kiss her hand. She begged us to embrace her, and on the following day everything resumed its usual course.

"For my own part, I never loved her, and in truth I was to blame, for she deserved our affection. Madame de Rochechouart's death was the cause of my first wish to leave the Convent."

Here the *Memoirs* written by the young Princess during her stay at the Abbaye-aux-Bois come to an end. Henceforth we shall have ourselves to relate the history of her life; drawing the materials of our story from her own correspondence and that of her family, from her notebook, and other sources of information discovered by diligent and patient research.

PART II

THE PRINCESS CH. DE LIGNE

I

The Prince-Bishop and Stanislaus-Augustus—The Diet in 1773—Second dismemberment of Poland—Prince Xavier and his tutor.

We must now return to the Bishop of Wilna, and see what had befallen him since 1772. We left him settled in Paris, as though he intended to remain there for life. Through his amiable disposition, cultivated mind, and taste for science and erudition, he formed many ties there. He was even made an Associated Member of the Academy of *Inscriptions* and *Belles Lettres*, and Madame Geoffrin, certain of her influence over him, was persuaded that he no longer meddled with politics. She little understood the changeable and restless mind of her protégé. Since the month of January 1773 the Prince-

Bishop had left Paris, and the following is a letter Madame Geoffrin received from the King of Poland :—

16th April 1773.

"The Bishop Massalski, after having urgently requested my uncle to judge his cause, after having refused to give him colleagues, as my uncle had himself proposed, has induced the Austrian minister to interfere by means of the authority, or rather the power, which his Court exercises in Poland, in order to prevent his suit being judged by my uncle, who, if the truth be known, is only too glad to be rid of the whole business. This inconsiderate conduct has greatly discredited the Bishop. It is a pity, for I have always said that there is a great deal of good in this Bishop."

Madame Geoffrin, although very much embarrassed at having to explain the Bishop's conduct, endeavoured still to find excuses for him.

Madame Geoffrin to the King.

2d May 1773

"I will at once answer your Majesty about the Bishop of Wilna. It is true that he has an amiable and gentle disposition that becomes him in society; but his character is so weak that he is incapable of keeping the resolutions he makes with the best intentions. The first person who cajoles him, or who raises the least suspicion in his mind, distracts him, so that he does not know on what he can rely. He has written to me, and I could see that he was in a great fright on writing to inform me of the new aspect of his affairs. He fears that this may estrange your Majesty from his cause. I assured him of the contrary, and told him I was certain that your Majesty and also the Prince Chancellor would be very glad to avoid judging this affair, which in all probability never will be tried.

"He has left us the Abbé Baudeau, to whom, as well as to Colonel Saint Leu, he had made the most splendid promises. They are both much attached to his person; and if he forgets them I do not know what will become of them. Saint Leu is perfectly devoted to the Bishop."

Meanwhile nearly all the exiled senators who had taken part in the Confederation of Bar were restored to favour, and returned to Poland to take their seats in the Senate. The Bishop of Wilna arrived amongst the first.

The King Stanislaus-Augustus to Madame Geoffrin.

"The Bishop of Wilna, when writing to inform you that my uncle would not judge his business, might have informed you also of several other changes in his conduct and in his principles. He is now the intimate friend of those who, not satisfied with having despoiled me of three-quarters of my kingdom,

are anxious to deprive me to a very great extent of my royal prerogatives.

"Moreover the appointment of a Permanent Council is contemplated, which will grant pardons instead of the King, and superintend, besides, all the transactions that take place between the Diets.

"Such are their intentions with regard to us. I was only informed of their decision at the opening of the Diet by the three Powers who have dismembered the kingdom."

The creation of the Permanent Council that the King dreaded was decided in August 1774. The delegations of Poland had resumed their sittings on the 1st of August. The ministers of the three Powers were present at the Assembly, and proposed the plan of a Permanent Council. The scheme met with the most strenuous opposition in the following sittings, especially on the part of the Lithuanian deputies; however, it was reported that the King had already given his

consent to the establishment of the council, and deputies were immediately sent to his Majesty in order to hear him confirm this rumour. The report was true: the King with his customary weakness had submitted. Pleading illness, he begged for a delay of several days, during which time he secretly hoped that the Bishop of Wilna would persuade the Lithuanian deputies to consent to the scheme.[1] Some slight modifications were made and urged by the foreign ministers, the King and the delegation were obliged to assent, and on the 7th of August the project was signed.

This may be considered as the date of the overthrowing of the ancient Polish constitution, and of the utter annihilation of the sovereign power.

The Bishop of Wilna had returned to Paris with a portfolio crammed full of schemes: "He had consulted all the philosophers of the time on the state of

[1] See the *Journal Encyclopédique*, September 1774.

Poland, and brought back plans borrowed from Rousseau and Mably, etc. He fancied he would find the salvation of his country in the abstract paradoxes of the former, or in the democratic delirium of the latter; and the confused state of his mind, open to every theory, exposed him to numerous delusions."[1]

He was named a member of the Permanent Council, and the King had little reason to be satisfied with his conduct. In the Warsaw paper called *Journal Encyclopédique* we find the following: "As for the Bishops of Cajavia and Wilna, they persist in distinguishing themselves by their constant opposition to the King's wishes."

Madame Geoffrin also writes to the King:—

19th September.

"As long as the Bishop of Wilna was in Paris, I could see how weak he was and how

[1] *Vide* Ferrand's *History of the Dismemberment of Poland.*

much he required to be guided. . . . When I saw him start for Poland, without taking either of his two acolytes, I foresaw all that would occur. I am more than ever convinced that one can have no confidence in weak minds and frivolous characters. The poor man will be his own dupe; others will avenge your Majesty."

In this case Madame Geoffrin showed herself a true prophet; but in the meantime honours and distinctions were being showered on the head of the Prince-Bishop. The Polish Government had lately constituted a body for the general direction of public instruction. This body received the name of Commissioners of National Education, and the Bishop was appointed president. It proceeded to reorganise the studies which had been completely interrupted by the suppression of the Jesuits, who until then had educated the Polish youth. It was decided that the sale of their possessions should furnish the capital necessary for the founding

of schools and universities as well as for the purchase and printing of the students' books.

While the Bishop of Wilna was busied with the education of his countrymen the tutor he had chosen during his stay in Paris for his own nephew, Prince Xavier, was discharging his functions in the worst possible manner. The Bishop had not wished to send the child to college on account of his delicate state of health. He preferred confiding him to some trustworthy man, who would be exclusively attached to his person. Madame Geoffrin consulted her friends on the subject, and Masson de Pezay,[1] a clever intriguer, a colonel and a poet, proposed his uncle, M. Boesnier-Delorme; he was a commissioner of woods and forests, a talented man and accustomed to good society, but his head was turned by the economists, and he was infatuated with their new theories.

[1] Alfred-Frédéric-Jacques Masson, called Marquis de Pezay, inspector-general of the sea-coast, born 1741, died 1777.

Notwithstanding this, as he was warmly recommended both by the Marquis de Mirabeau and the Abbé Baudeau, for whom the Bishop had a great regard, the offer was accepted. A salary of thirty thousand livres[1] per annum was agreed upon for M. Delorme, including an under-tutor, a gentleman, and a lackey, who were more specially assigned to the child's service. The same amount was offered to Masson de Pezay on signing the agreement, and a further sum of sixty thousand livres was promised besides to M. Delorme when his pupil's education should be finished.

It would have been difficult to make a worse choice. M. Delorme spent his time travelling for the benefit of his agricultural affairs, and squandered his money in costly experiments on his property near Blois, situated on the banks of the Loire. During the winter he resided chiefly in Paris, where he faithfully attended the receptions of the Baron

[1] Twelve hundred pounds sterling.

d'Holbach and Madame Geoffrin, as well as the political dinners given by the Marquis de Mirabeau. As for his pupil, he dragged him about in his summer travels, and during the winter left him at the mercy of underlings without exercising the slightest supervision. The child, barely seven years old, and an orphan from his birth, was puny and delicate, and would have required a mother's incessant care. Instead of getting stronger, his health deteriorated from bad to worse; either left to himself, or ill-treated by a brutal and ignorant under-tutor, encouraged in low and precocious instincts by a debauched lackey, the unfortunate child contracted bad habits, and when, at the end of the term fixed for his education, the uncle claimed his return to Poland in 1778, M. Delorme brought back a child of fourteen, half crazy, absolutely ignorant, and in a most deplorable state of health. It is easy to understand the indignation of the Bishop, who had been carefully kept in ignorance of his nephew's condition. M.

Delorme did not dare to face an interview. He sent the young Prince to Wilna accompanied by a servant, and prudently remained himself at Warsaw. He had, nevertheless, the audacity to claim the 60,000 livres promised on the completion of Prince Xavier's education. The Bishop flatly refused it, and only paid the travelling expenses. But by dint of successful scheming in Warsaw Delorme obtained a sum of 20,000 francs from the family council, and returned in haste to Paris. He had received 30,000 livres during six years—that is, 180,000 plus 3600 at the outset, and 20,000 at the end, which made up a total of 230,000 livres,[1] in payment for so successful an education.[2]

The young Prince was settled at Werky, in the magnificent residence of his uncle, at a short distance from Wilna. He was treated

[1] 230,000 livres are £9200 sterling.

[2] This story is told differently in the *Memoirs of Durfort de Cheverny*, edited by M. de Crêvecœur; but even after a careful consideration of his version, we consider our own the most correct.

with the most tender care, his uncle never let him out of his sight, and took him with him during his frequent visits to Warsaw. A confidential man named Levert was attached to his person; he was sent by the Marquis de Mirabeau, who, indignant at Delorme's conduct, and most distressed at having recommended him, had remained on the best of terms with the Prince-Bishop. It was precisely at this period that unforeseen circumstances, in which Hélène was concerned, gave rise to a rather curious correspondence between the Bishop and the Marquis.

II

Hélène's suitors—The Duc d'Elbœuf and the Prince de Salm—Negotiations of marriage—The Marquis de Mirabeau and the Comtesse de Brionne—Madame de Pailly—The Bishop of Wilna's refusal—A fresh suitor—The Prince Charles de Ligne.

WHILE Hélène was bringing to a close the story of her peaceful years of convent life, the reputation of her beauty, her name, and her fortune had spread beyond the walls of the old Abbey.

The young Princess had already made her appearance at children's balls. The Duchesses de Mortemart, de Châtillon, du Châtelet, de Choiseul, and others, whose daughters or nieces were her companions, often took Hélène out with them. More than one mother, anxious for her son's provision in life, had turned her thoughts towards the little Pole, and disposed her artillery with a

view towards securing auxiliaries in the field. The young girl was not long in finding this out, but with much discretion she appeared not to notice anything. Her plans were already marked out; she was better acquainted than any one with her uncle's weakness of character, and knew well she would only make the marriage she chose. Two suitors came forward at the same time. The first was the Duc d'Elbœuf, Prince de Vaudemont, second son of the Comtesse de Brionne, of the house of Rohan-Rochefort, and of Comte Charles-Louis de Lorraine, Grand Equerry of France. Though of such noble birth, the Prince's fortune was small, and an alliance with a rich heiress was for him the chief object in view. The Comtesse de Brionne, an intimate friend of the Duc de Choiseul, saw Hélène at Chanteloup. The grace and charm of the young girl attracted her attention, and on returning to Paris she carefully informed herself of both Hélène's present and future prospects. It

has not been forgotten that at the beginning of her *Memoirs* the little Princess mentions the Comtesse de Rochefort as a friend of her uncle's. This lady and her friend, the Marquis de Mirabeau, were among those who frequented the Comtesse de Brionne's receptions. The Marquis de Mirabeau was, as we know, a great friend of the Bishop of Wilna, and kept up a constant correspondence with him; nothing was therefore easier than for the Countess to procure all the information she desired.

It was in this small circle that was woven the matrimonial plot which is now to be unfolded before our eyes, and we can see how in those days, as at present, slight importance was attached to mutual feeling, or to conformity of taste or character; fortune, rank, and name were the only conditions required.

It was decided that the Marquis de Mirabeau should open fire by writing to the Bishop. But it was felt that he could not bring the affair to a good issue unassisted;

his haughty and violent temper, the uncertainty of his disposition, required the controlling influence of a feminine mind. The right person was ready to hand, and Madame de Pailly, whose intimacy with the Marquis was well known, was deputed to assist him in this matter.[1]

Madame de Pailly was very pretty, and possessed a quick, shrewd intelligence, well fitted for intrigue. The great Mirabeau, who had good reason to hate her, wrote as follows :—

"This woman has the cleverness of five hundred thousand demons, or angels, if you prefer it; but she is equally dangerous by reason of her beauty, and her intensely designing disposition."

[1] Madame de Pailly was the daughter of Captain de Malvieu, of the Swiss guards; her family came from Berne, but her father's rank keeping him in France, she had been brought up there, and while still very young had married M. de Pailly, a Swiss officer, also in the French service. Her husband took his pension and returned to Lausanne; Madame de Pailly often went to see him there, but she continued to reside in Paris, and was, in fact, completely separated from him after the year 1762. For more details see *Memoirs of Mirabeau*, by Lucas de Montigny; *The Comtesse de Rochefort and her Friends*, by Louis de Loménie.

We are not concerned with the unedifying position that Madame de Pailly occupied in the Mirabeau family.;[1] we merely conclude that she must have conducted herself with sufficient reserve or decency, as it was then called, to be admitted into the society of the Comtesse de Brionne and that of her aunt, the Princesse de Ligne-Luxembourg. The *black hen*, as she was called by her intimates, was delighted to play a part in this affair. She desired beyond everything to be useful to such great ladies, and neglected nothing to attain this end. Madame de Pailly's letters were quoted in her society "as models of sentiment and elegance;" we may add of acuteness and moderation.

MADAME DE PAILLY TO THE PRINCESSE DE LIGNE-LUXEMBOURG.

PARIS, 26*th December* 1777.

"I enclose, Madame, a copy of M. de Mira-

[1] The Princesse de Luxembourg, born de Bethisy, was a sister of the Princesse de Rohan-Montauban, mother of the Comtesse de Brionne.

beau's letter to the Bishop. On handing it to me yesterday morning he said: 'Be assured that this negotiation will succeed; Providence will aid you. I could not have written you this morning, but having suffered all night from a violent attack of asthma I employed the time in doing so. It may have suffered from my condition,[1] but nevertheless I think I have said all that was necessary.'

"He begs the Comtesse de Brionne will forgive the freedom with which he has spoken of her and her family; he thought it advisable to preserve towards the Bishop the same frankness he has always shown him, and, moreover, that his letter should not appear to have been dictated. The Abbé[2] was quite satisfied with it.

"We are agreed as to what he (the Abbé) should say in his letter. He will resolutely

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[1] The Marquis was ill, and very much taken up trying to obtain an order for the imprisonment of his son at the Bastille.

[2] The Abbé Baudeau, who thoroughly understood the Bishop's character, having been attached to his service in 1772, during his first stay in Paris.

treat the question of the dowry, and will make all necessary observations. He even adds that in order to influence the undecided character of the Bishop he will enclose in his letter a copy of the answer he should send the Marquis de Mirabeau. The Abbé has often used this plan with success on previous occasions.

"He does not appear much alarmed at the competition of the 'modern prince,'[1] and following the usual bent of his mind, which leads him to believe in what he wishes, he does not doubt for one moment of our success in this affair, and will carry it through rapidly."

The Marquis de Mirabeau was perhaps not the best person for a negotiation of this sort, and his nature was certainly not conciliatory; but in spite of his violence, his tyrannical character, and fantastical ideas, his was not an ordinary intelligence. He had much observation, and expressed his ideas in

[1] Prince Frédéric de Salm.

an original, glowing, and picturesque style, though occasionally somewhat obscure.

The Marquis de Mirabeau to the Bishop of Wilna.

Paris, 25*th December* 1777.

"My Lord—My gratitude for your kindness, and the affection I feel in return for the friendship you have conferred upon me, have caused me to entertain an idea which I think suitable both as regards the greatness of your family and your own happiness. I have conducted the affair to a point where, if it meets with your approval, it can be further developed, but without compromising you in the slightest degree should you have other intentions.

"I know your affection for the scions of your illustrious family, whose destiny both law and nature, the will of their ancestor,[1] and their own helplessness, have confided to your care.

"I have not forgotten that it formed part of

[1] Prince Massalski, Grand General of Lithuania.

your plan that the young Princess, your niece, should be established in France. I have heard that she has given much satisfaction, and that each day she has shown herself more worthy of your care and affection. I have therefore thought of an alliance worthy of you in every way. Next in rank to our Princes of the blood, who, though always 'peers' of the blood were only raised by law above the other peers less than two centuries ago, we have nothing in France that can equal the House of Lorraine.

"This family is now reduced in France to two branches. One of them is almost extinct; the only remaining male representative being the Prince de Marsan, who has never married. The other branch is that of the Princes of Lambesc, Grand Equerries of France, at whose head stands the beautiful Comtesse de Brionne, whom you know,[1] and who occupies her

[1] The beauty of the Comtesse de Brionne was famous. The Duchesse de Villeray, in sending her a netting needle, addressed to her the following lines :—

position with as much dignity as splendour. This Princess has been left a widow with two sons and two daughters. The two Princes are : the Prince de Lambesc, Grand Equerry, and the Duc d'Elbœuf,[1] a young Prince eighteen years of age, of a fine, noble mien and gentle character, with whom all his family are satisfied—a rare thing anywhere, in the present day, especially with us. The eldest, the Prince de Lambesc, has until now refused to marry with a persistency that time alone can overcome.[2] His younger brother

"L'emblême frappe ici vos yeux.
Si les grâces, l'amour et l'amitié parfaite
Peuvent jamais former des nœuds,
Vous devez tenir la navette."

An emblem here meets your gaze, If grace, love, and perfect friendship Can ever be knit together, Then you must hold the shuttle.

[1] Prince Marie-Joseph de Lorraine, Duc d'Elbœuf, Prince de Vaudemont, was the son of Charles-Louis de Lorraine, Comte de Brionne, Grand Equerry of France, and of Julia-Constance de Rohan. He emigrated with his brother, the Prince de Lambesc, and they entered into the service of Austria. Their rank of Princes of Lorraine gave them special favour in the Emperor's eyes, and they both attained the rank of field-marshal. It was to the Prince de Lambesc that the young Princesse de Montmorency was betrothed.

[2] Time effectually overcame it. He married in 1812 the

even went so far as to throw himself at his feet to implore him to do so on one important occasion.[1] The two brothers are very amicable. It is on the Prince d'Elbœuf that I have cast my eye, as representing, in the interim, the sole hope of his family, and I thought it well not to delay.

"Madame de Brionne is very clever, very watchful over the interests of her family, especially with regard to the settlement of her children. Active, without being restless, noble and elevated in her ideas on general matters, easy on questions of detail, amiable to the exact degree or extent she chooses, but having never displeased anybody or anything any more than her own mirror. This is not a portrait: it is a plain description, such as is necessary, for all depends upon her; she will be a pillar of

Countess Colloredo, a widow, beautiful in spite of her forty years, witty and ill-natured. He separated from her at the end of two years.

[1] On the occasion of his proposed marriage with Mademoiselle de Montmorency

support—to the young Princess, who, with her noble mind and ardent feelings, will prosper under such guidance; to the young couple also, who will require sustaining and directing; and lastly, to your Lordship, when you come to live amongst us; for if I cared for society I should prefer the dull moments of Madame de Brionne to the wittiest of all the others.

"Pray take counsel with yourself, my Lord, and send me word if I am to withdraw my promises. Any other will follow up the affair as well, and better, than I can, and ought even to do so. But I alone could give you my idea with all its developments. If the plan suits you avoid all delays. State things exactly as they are to be, so that we may consider them as signed and ratified.

"In any case, pray forgive the liberty I have taken by interfering in your affairs, and consider me, etc.

"*P.S.*—I ask: 1. If the idea meets with your approval.

"2. The conditions you require.

"3. Those you will grant."

While this negotiation was being carried on Hélène had met, in the course of her frequent appearances in society, Prince Frédéric[1] de Salm, who had come as if by chance to a young ladies' ball. His reputation as a successful man of the world, his debts, and his conduct, did little credit to the name he bore. Unscrupulous in the choice of his amusements, frequenting the worst society, of doubtful courage, he commanded in Paris no sort of consideration. He was reproached, on the occasion of a duel he fought with an officer of the King's guards, with having taken the precaution of secretly protecting himself with a large muff. On arriving at the ground he refused to undress, and rushed on his adversary unawares. The latter gave him

[1] Frédéric-Jean Othon, hereditary Prince of Salm-Kybourg; his mother was a Princesse de Horn. He was born on 11th May 1746, and died on the scaffold in 1794.

a thrust that would have pierced him through and through had it not been for the protecting muff. The recoil caused by this obstacle threw the officer to the ground, and the seconds had all the difficulty in the world to prevent the Prince from killing his fallen adversary.

The Prince de Salm had a handsome face, easy manners, a gay disposition, and a supple mind. Hélène ignored the dishonourable details of his private life. She only saw in him an elegant cavalier, bearing a great name, and above all, the certainty of a fixed residence in Paris, in the magnificent mansion the Salms had built, on the Quay d'Orsay.[1]

She would not hear of the Duc d'Elbœuf, in spite of his brilliant prospects; she dreaded Madame de Brionne as a mother-in-law, and allowed herself to be strongly influenced by the Prince de Salm's friends, who did not miss an opportunity of exciting the young girl's imagination. The Bishop, led by his niece,

[1] This hotel is actually the palace of the Legion of Honour; it was built by the architect Rousseau.

returned an ambiguous answer, adjourned his decision, spoke of a probable journey to Paris, and ended by no longer concealing the fresh candidature of the Prince de Salm.

The Comtesse de Brionne ardently desired to continue the negotiations, and she consulted Mirabeau as to the best means of attaining her end. The Marquis replied in a long letter, of which the following is an extract :[1]—

"It is absolutely necessary that the Countess should have as representative a staid and honourable man, acting on her authority, and capable of defeating the intrigues he will meet with. National jealousy, errors of fact, important changes in places and ideas, distractions and dissipations of all kinds, in fact every sort of disappointment, await him ; quite enough to worry out of his mind any sensible man.

"It must, however, be borne in mind that

[1] The letters of the Marquis de Mirabeau and those of Madame de Pailly on the subject of Hélène's marriage are numerous, and are amongst the sequestrated papers. Letter T, *Portfolio de Ligne* 1-4 *of the National Archives*. We only give extracts from them.

he must not be expected to conclude, treat, or decide anything, but only to obtain ample and reliable information as to the family possessions, customs, etc., to keep the Bishop in a favourable frame of mind, to sketch out the conditions with him, and try to bring him round to our views. I cannot deny that this is too much to expect from a man alone, in a strange country; for this there is only one remedy, which, if we can obtain it, I think will succeed—it is to get the Abbé Baudeau to accompany him on the journey. I know all that can be said against him, and he is the first to own his faults; he would spoil any business requiring time, but an affair that has to be carried off at the outset is quite another matter, and he is the first man in Europe for that kind of thing, thanks to his business-like aptitude and resources. He is ingenious, insinuating, as good as he is scatter-brained, of easy and lively habits, knowing how to influence the Bishop, which he does, not by thwarting him, but by turning him

round like a glove. In short, whatever objections there may be to him, we cannot have men made on purpose. This one has a clear head, and will elucidate matters both here and over there; he enjoys the confidence of the young Princess, and knows how to manage her; he can work up the Bishop as he pleases. In fact, even had he none of these advantages, which I consider quite exceptional for the affair in hand, or did he not know the country as he does, I should think it of capital importance to employ him in carrying through a business of this kind.

"What I can guarantee, not only as the result of my express warning, but also by the fact that he has already suffered from it, is, that he will not meddle with politics or economy, or any other subject of discussion, and that, provided his travelling companion behaves to him in a simple and friendly way, neither allowing himself to be ruled by him, nor still less contradicting him openly, he will be quite satisfied with him, and

will find him most useful. I must appear to write at great length on this subject, but I assure you that I am actuated by no prejudice. In reality I have more liking than is supposed for sensible business; but try watering cabbages with lavender water, and you will see if they grow! . . ."

Notwithstanding the Marquis's eloquence, the Abbé Baudeau did not start for Poland, as the negotiations fell through. By a second letter the Prince-Bishop, under the influence of his niece, declined for her the honour of entering the house of Lorraine.[1] The unsuccessful result of the negotiations undertaken by Madame de Pailly had vexed her much; she feared the displeasure of the Comtesse de Brionne, and still more that of her aunt, the Princesse de Ligne-Luxembourg,[2] whom she had special

[1] In the same year the Duc d'Elbœuf consoled himself by marrying, on 30th December 1778, Mademoiselle de Montmorency-Lagny.

[2] Henriette-Eugénie de Bethisy de Mézières, widow of the High and Mighty Lord Claude-Hyacinthe-Ferdinand Lamoral, Prince de Ligne and of the Holy Empire.

reasons for wishing to please. The Princess, formerly lady-in-waiting to the late Queen of Spain, had, by virtue of that office, been given by the King an apartment in the palace of the Tuileries. She received a limited but carefully-chosen circle, of which Madame de Pailly would have been proud to form part, though the society was a very dull one. The old Princess, according to her contemporaries, had the most hideous fifty-year-old face that had ever been seen, a fat, shiny countenance, without any rouge, lividly pale, and adorned with a chin three stories deep. The Duchesse de Tallard used to say "that she was like a dripping tallow-candle." But she was obliging and kind, and soon consoled herself for the failure of the projected marriage. She confided to the negotiating lady that she had another scheme in view. This time she had turned her thoughts to Prince Charles de Ligne, nephew of her late husband. In point of fortune the young Prince's position was far superior to that of

the Duc d'Elbœuf, and if his family occupied in France a less elevated rank than that of the house of Lorraine—which was a reigning family—on the score of nobility it was inferior to none.

Madame de Pailly, delighted at the confidence the Princess reposed in her, thanked her for it as for a favour, and set to work, resolved to profit by the experience she had acquired and avoid another failure.

She began by making the Abbé Baudeau and the Marquis write to the Prince-Bishop that nothing could be concluded in his absence, and that among the crowd of suitors, which every day increased, it was impossible he could discern at a distance what would be the best match for his niece.

Then she cleverly tried to discover what was the influence which had been brought to bear on the young Princess that disposed her so strongly in favour of the Prince de Salm. She learned that he had gained over to his

cause one of the lady residents in the Convent, whom Hélène frequently went to see.[1]

Once fully acquainted with all the details of the situation, she drew up her batteries accordingly, and won over to her side three of Hélène's best friends: the young Duchesse de Choiseul and Mesdemoiselles de Conflans. She got mutual friends to urge them quietly to influence the young Princess, and then patiently awaited the arrival of the Bishop, which could not long be delayed.

Before seriously opening up negotiations the Princesse de Ligne had written to Prince Charles and his mother to inform them of her plan, and of the advantages she saw in this alliance. But she did not hide the preference over his numerous competitors which the young girl showed towards the

[1] This lady was no other than the Marquise de Mesnard, separated from her husband, the Marquis de Marigny, brother to Madame de Pompadour. She inhabited in 1778 a magnificent apartment in the Abbaye-aux-Bois, where she received the most brilliant society. She was on intimate terms with the Prince-Cardinal Louis de Rohan, and with the Princesse de Salm, mother of Prince Frédéric.

Prince Frédéric de Salm. Prince Charles did not seem very much flattered, and wrote to his aunt as follows :—

March 1779.

"I have received, my dear aunt, the letters you have had the goodness to write to me, and have immediately forwarded them to my father. I foresee that there will be many difficulties in the affair you mention. It will require all the perseverance you possess with regard to what interests you, and tax to the utmost your kindness towards the whole of our family; a kindness whereof we are deeply sensible, and for which once more, my dear aunt, we offer you our best thanks.

"The little lady appears to me of decided character, and not very delicate in her choice, since she prefers the Prince de Salm, who has such a bad reputation. I only hope the Bishop will not decide! for it takes so long to receive the answers.

"Receive, my dear aunt, etc."

From this letter it appears that the young

Prince was not very much delighted at the proposed marriage, but his mother took up the matter with more eagerness, and begged her cousin to continue the negotiations.

The latter, then staying at her niece's, Madame de Brionne, in the Château de Limours, wrote to Madame de Pailly, and offered to come herself to Paris to talk over the great affair. Madame de Pailly replies :—

"I had hoped, Madame, that this week would not have elapsed without your coming to Paris. I greatly desire to have the honour of seeing you, in order to tell you about our affair. You may be sure that I have made the best possible use of what you deigned to inform me. It would be too long for me to write to you all that has been said on one side and on the other, but the last word of *our uncle* is that he must know what will be the total fortune of the young Prince in the future, and what allowance his father means to give him at present. He has repeated several

times that that was the essential point to be cleared up; that he found all the other conditions most suitable; that with regard to the residence in Brussels, his niece was very sensible, and that he flattered himself he would have no difficulty in persuading her, if that was the only obstacle in the way.

"It is true that he adds: 'But may we not hope that the Prince de Ligne will come to Paris?' I answered that I thought not, and, indeed, that this change of residence would not be to his advantage; that I thought his niece would find it very agreeable to be at the same time a great lady in Brussels, in Vienna, and at Versailles; that the Prince de Ligne's establishments in Flanders were such that they were preferable to any that might be had elsewhere. . . ."

Madame de Pailly conducted the whole business very cleverly. She called on the young Princess, and, feigning to ignore the preference that Hélène openly avowed for the Prince de Salm, she carefully avoided

mentioning the subject. But she boldly faced the other obstacle—that of an establishment in Brussels.

She dwelt at great length on the exceptional position of the Princes de Ligne in Vienna and in the Netherlands. Then she gave a most brilliant description of that occupied by the Prince's father at Versailles, where he spent most of his time when free from military service. She gave Hélène to understand that with the great preference the Prince showed for the French Court, she would easily find in him an ally towards obtaining an establishment in Paris; for he adored his son, and would be happy to have him near. Only it was essential to gain time, and care must be taken not to clash with the Princesse de Ligne, who was the least disposed to accept this arrangement.

This conversation made a tolerably deep impression on Hélène, who, for the first time, did not oppose a formal refusal to the proposed alliance with the Prince de Ligne;

she merely asked to be allowed to reflect, and to await the arrival of her uncle before taking a decision. The delay was granted the more easily that the Princes de Ligne, both father and son, were at that time engaged with the army, Austria being at war with Prussia as to the succession of the electorate of Bavaria.

We will now leave Hélène to her reflections, and turn our attention to the two personages who are about to play such an important part in her life.

III

The de Ligne family—Prince Charles—War in Bavaria—Engagement at Pösig—The Prince de Ligne's letter to his son—The Treaty of Teschen.

The De Ligne family was one of the most illustrious in Flanders. Its head, Charles-Joseph, Prince de Ligne, Prince of the Holy Empire, Lord Paramount of Fagnolles, and Lord of the Manors of Beaudour, Bel Œil, Valincourt and other territories, Marquis of Roubaix and Dormans, Baron of Fauquenberghe, Baron of Wershin, Knight of the Golden Fleece, Grandee of Spain of the first class, first *ber* of Flanders, Peer, Seneschal and Marshal of Hainault, was General in the Austrian army, Captain of the Trabans, Colonel and owner of a regiment of Walloon

infantry, and chamberlain to their Imperial Majesties.[1]

These honours were certainly sufficient to satisfy the highest ambition, but they were not all. In addition to all these titles we must add the position enjoyed by the Prince de Ligne at Versailles, Vienna, and Brussels—a position acquired by his brilliant personal qualities. Handsome, brave, generous, chivalrous, gifted with a dazzling imagination, lively wit, and a mind full of impulsive brilliancy, he was, notwithstanding all these advantages, the most unaffected of men. He is mentioned in all contemporary memoirs, even by those of most diverse opinions. Mesdames de Staël, de Genlis, the Comte de Ségur, the adventurer Casanova, the Emperor Joseph, Voltaire, the Empress Catherine, and others, all unite in a concert of praise, and not a discordant note jars upon the general harmony. Madame de Staël winds up her portrait of him by

[1] At a latter period he became field-marshal, like his father and grandfather.

saying, like Eschine : "If you are astonished at what I say of him, how much more so would you be if you knew him!" Such was the future father-in-law of Hélène.

Prince Charles-Joseph had been brought up by his father in the strictest manner. "My father did not care for me," he says : "I know not why, for we hardly knew each other. He never spoke to me ; it was not the fashion at that time to be either a good father or a good husband. My mother feared him extremely. She gave birth to me dressed in her farthingale, and died in the same dress, a few weeks later, so strict was he as to appearances and stately formalities."

His military career was most brilliant, and his promotion rapid. At the age of twenty he was named colonel of his father's regiment of dragoons. He immediately wrote to inform him of the fact, and the following is the answer he received:—

"It was already unfortunate enough for me, sir, to have you as a son without the

additional misfortune of having you as my colonel."

His son replied: "My lord, neither the one nor the other are my fault, and it is the Emperor your Highness must make responsible for the second misfortune."

The Prince married in 1755 the Princesse de Lichtenstein,[1] and in September 1759, while he was busy fighting the Prussians before Meissen, he received the news of the birth of a son.

"I have a son," he writes joyfully. "Ah! how I shall love him; I already wish I could write and tell him so. . . . If I come back from this war I shall say to him: 'Be welcome: I am sure I am going to love you with all my heart!'"

The Prince had suffered too severely from the harshness of his father to be willing to imitate it. All his children were brought

[1] Françoise-Marie-Xavière de Lichtenstein, born 25th November 1740, daughter of Emanuel, Prince de Lichtenstein, and of Marie-Antoine de Dietrichstein-Weichseltadt.

up with the greatest affection, but he was never able to refrain from showing a marked preference to the eldest, Prince Charles, suitor to our young Princess. He taught him what he knew so well himself—"to fight like a gentleman." The little Prince, while still a child, was led to battle by his father.

"I had a slight skirmish at the outposts with the Prussians," he says, "and, jumping into the saddle with him as we galloped along, I took his little hand in mine. At the first shot I ordered I said to him: 'It would be charming, my Charles, if we had a little wound together.' And he laughed, and swore, and became excited, and spoke quite judiciously!"

After having been at Strasburg[1] for four years, Prince Charles entered the Austrian

[1] At that time there was a famous school of artillery at Strasburg, directed by de Marzy.

By the treaty of Ryswick, signed in 1697, Alsace at that time belonged to France. Strasburg had capitulated on the 30th September 1681, and made its submission to Louis XIV. Fortified by Vauban it had become a formidable fortress. The arsenal contained nine hundred cannon.

service, at the age of sixteen, as second lieutenant of engineers. He would have preferred the artillery, but chose the engineers to please his father.

At the moment when the negotiations for Hélène's marriage were begun war had just broken out between Austria and Prussia, on the question of the succession in Bavaria, and the two Princes de Ligne were with the Austrian army.

The Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian-Joseph, had died on the 30th of December 1777 without male issue. Notwithstanding the indisputable rights of the Elector-Palatine, several other princes raised pretensions to the succession. The most formidable of these pretenders was the Emperor Joseph II. Barely had the Elector closed his eyes when the Austrian troops marched on the Bavarian frontier.

This caused great uneasiness in Prussia, and the young Duc des Deux-Ponts, urged on and supported by Frederick the Great,

protested before the Germanic Diet against Austria's designs. The Elector of Saxony followed his example, and while this serious discussion was going on Joseph and Frederick went, the one into Silesia, the other into Bohemia, to take command of the large armies they had raised. They remained thus in presence of each other for several months. Marie-Thérèse, who feared war, carried on secret negotiations to stop it. Joseph, on the contrary, anxious for a contest with the great Frederick, urged it on with all his might.[1]

The Austrian army was divided into two corps, the one officially commanded by the Emperor, but in reality by Marshal de Lascy, and the other by Marshal Laudon; it included the Lycanians or Croats, and picked grenadier regiments under the Prince de Ligne.

[1] Rulhière, a passionate but keen observer, wrote of the Emperor Joseph: "Peace was pain and anxiety for him, *invasion* and *conquest* was the result of all his meditations. These two words had made the celebrity of Frederick, and it was by them that Joseph wished to attain and even surpass his rival. This proud man was constantly tortured by a nervous and jealous anxiety."

His headquarters were at Bezesnow, in Bohemia. His son was in Marshal de Lascy's corps, occupying a strong position behind the steep banks of the Elbe; three lines of forts defended the passage of the river. Prince Charles was in fact principally occupied with the construction of these forts, and his father constantly wrote to him. The following letters will show the affectionate terms that existed between them. It would appear that Prince Charles was dissatisfied at the manner in which the fortifications were being made.

From my Headquarters at
BEZESNOW, 26*th June* 1778.

"Well, my engineer, so you are still fortifying your position, but you are not fortifying your esteem for the genius of our engineers? I have much trouble, on my side, to fortify myself against *ennui*.

"The Emperor came here to make what we may well call a fuss. He said he wished for war, but did not believe in it. '*Who will*

take a bet?' he said to us the other day. '*Everybody*,' replied Marshal Laudon, who is always in a bad temper. '*Everybody means nobody*.'—'*But I for one will bet*,' said Marshal Lascy. '*How much?*' said the Emperor, who expected him to propose about twenty ducats. '*Two hundred thousand florins*,' said the Marshal. The Emperor pulled a long face, and felt he had received a public reprimand.

"He has been very gracious to me. He is in constant fear lest one should play the pedant by him. He was satisfied with my troops, and said many nice things about you, my dear Charles, for he had seen you work marvellously well. He has just left; I can still see him from my windows.

"I laugh at myself and the others when I think that, unappreciated though I be, I value myself so much more than they suppose. I personally superintend every platoon. I make myself hoarse with giving the word of command to six battalions at the same time.

"I personally inspect even the very smallest huts, called in Bohemia *kaloups*, each containing only four soldiers, and taste their soup, their bread, weigh their meat, in order to see that they are not cheated. There is not one whom I do not talk to, whom I do not supply with something; not an officer I do not feed, and whom I do not rouse to the war. My comrades do nothing of this kind, and they are very wise, as no one cares. Not one of them cares for the war; they utter the most pacific speeches before the young men, whom they expect in the future to be zealous and good generals. This is also very well. They will be made generals before I shall, and that also will be very well.

"It is six weeks since I have spoken a word of French; but, on the other hand, to repay me for a tiresome dinner, I have the pleasure, on leaving the table, of receiving thirty bows at a time."

"If an infantry officer may salute an engineer in the exercise of his genius, I embrace

you, my dear boy. I am delighted that you should get praised for doing bad work. Good-bye, my excellent work ; good-bye, my masterpiece, almost as much so as Christine."[1]

In the meantime the Emperor and the King of Prussia remained stationary, constantly exchanging letters. The Prince de Ligne, who was well posted up, kept his son informed of what was going on.

BEZESNOW, *5th July*.

"I have this moment heard that the Marshal asked the Emperor, on Saint John's Day, how he had answered the letter he had received that day from the King of Prussia. 'I have nonplussed him,' he answered ; 'I represented that the season was advancing, and that I wished to receive some lessons from so great a master. When do you think, my dear Marshal, that I shall get his answer?' The Marshal counted on his fingers, and

[1] Princess Christine was the eldest daughter of the Prince de Ligne ; she married in 1775 Comte Clary, eldest son of the prince of that name ; she was adored by all who knew her.

replied: 'In eight days; but he will bring it himself to your Majesty.'

"I have just heard that he has entered Bohemia; to-day is the 5th July, the calculation is exact; so much the better; I have received orders to march with all my corps."

The King of Prussia had suddenly made his appearance at Nachod, at the head of his advanced guard. "We hoped it," says the Prince de Ligne, "but did not expect it." He writes to his son:—

July.

"As I do not suppose you have already left Pardubitz for the army, I must write and give you some news of it. The Emperor was informed that the King was advancing at the head of I do not know how many columns. He went at full gallop to the redoubt number 7, and asked about twenty times: 'Where is the Marshal?' The latter came up slowly for the first time in his life: 'Well, Field-Marshal, I have had you looked for everywhere.'—'Well, Sire, there is the King.

—Give me your spy-glass. . . . Ah! there he is himself, I bet! on a large English horse . . . perhaps his Anhalt, look.'—'That is possible; but they have not come alone to beat us; look at the strength of the columns, Oh! there is one that certainly numbers ten thousand men. They are coming to attack us?'—'Perhaps, what o'clock is it?'—'Eleven o'clock.'—'They will only be in battle line in two hours' time, then they will cook their dinner, so shall we; they will certainly not attack your Majesty to-day.'—'No, but to-morrow?'—'To-morrow! I think not, nor the day after, nor even at all during this campaign.'

"You will recognise the phlegmatic and bitter style of our excellent Marshal, annoyed at the constant interference and anxiety of the Emperor, who on these occasions feels that he is not master of the situation."

At last the war began, but the opposing parties contented themselves with observing each other's movements. Prince Charles re-

joined his father at Mickenhau on the 30th of July, and he became one of his aides-de-camp; he was always to be found at the outposts, and in the midst of danger was remarkably cool and courageous. His father constantly speaks of him with a pride that he cannot conceal: "Charles is splendid under fire; I cannot restrain his ardour, he has such presence of mind, such spirits and animation, that he encourages every one. I must also add that the Emperor is very much pleased with him." It is thus that the Prince expresses himself in the picturesque and delightful description he has given of this Bavarian war; a war presenting this peculiarity, that not a shot was fired in Bavaria, and that two armies of more than a hundred thousand men, one commanded by the King of Prussia, the other by the Emperor of Austria, remained during nine months in sight of each other without fighting a single battle, contenting themselves with slight skirmishes or small outpost attacks.

The Prince, in despair at this state of inaction,[1] seized every opportunity of attacking the enemy. We will quote the account he gives of the fight of Pösig; it was the first action in which Prince Charles took part, and had a great influence on his military career.

"Prince Henry's[2] hussars had taken up a strong position on the heights of Hühnerwasser. In order to dislodge them it was necessary first to take the Convent of Pösig, where there was a small garrison of about forty men, who spent their days watching all that took place in our camp. This perpetual spying irritated M. de Laudon a great deal. I told him that Colonel d'Aspremont had already proposed to attack them, but that

[1] War was a real delight to the Prince de Ligne; from his childhood he was passionately fond of it. When he speaks of a battle he says: "A battle is like an ode of Pindar: you must throw into it an enthusiasm bordering on madness! To describe it properly would, I think, require the sort of intoxication one feels at the moment of victory."

[2] Prince Henry of Prussia, brother of the King, born 8th January 1726, died 3d April 1802. He is said to have had great military talent; but his brother was jealous of him and did not like him.

even if the position were carried it would be difficult to retain it, being situated nearer to Prince Henry than to us. He told me to try if I could. . . . But the garrison was on the watch. A sentinel had been placed at the door of the monk who gave me information, the main entrance to the Convent had been barricaded, and they had raised trestles. The brave Lycanians began the attack an hour before daybreak, at the very moment that I was drawing up my men on the small plain. Fifty were chosen to form the scaling party. All wanted to go, but there were only five ladders, and if I had sent for more the news would have spread in the country. Although the ladders were short, one of the brave Croatians was killed on the wall. On arriving they were greeted by a shower of stones, and Colonel d'Aspremont could no longer restrain them. The excellent and worthy Lieutenant Wolf went up first; he was shot through the arm. All of a sudden they heard, without knowing where the news came from, that the

gates had been burst open, and every one rushed thither. Wolf was shot through the body, and died two days after, telling me that if he had a thousand lives he would be glad to sacrifice them all in my service. A sergeant and five sappers who burst open the gates were killed on the spot, and twenty-five men were wounded.

"Nothing has ever grieved me so much as seeing these fine, excellent fellows, stretched side by side with their lieutenant uttering these touching things. Formerly when I sacrificed the lives of my men, sometimes needlessly, we shared the same dangers, and it had not the same effect on me. But I had sent these poor fellows forward, and unable to be everywhere at once, thinking moreover to be of more use where I was, I remained behind, and perceived that it is often a hard thing to be a general officer, as one is obliged to expose one's men to dangers which one cannot share."

Prince Charles was so struck with the

confidence and devotion his father inspired in his men, and with the praises bestowed on him by Lieutenant Wolf on his deathbed, that he remembered it all his life, as we shall see later on. A few days after Marshal Laudon [1] came to the Prince, and ordered him to advance all his troops, and dislodge the Hühnerwasser huzzars.

"We had scarcely got to Jezoway when the rattle of the carbines was heard; the Marshal in consequence began to get excited, and I saw, on a reduced scale, the conqueror of Frankfort and of Landshut; it was the first and last time he smiled through the whole of the campaign.

[1] Laudon (Gédéon-Ernest, Baron of), an Austrian field-marshal, born 16th October 1710 at Trolsen in Livonia. He first served in the Russian army from 1733 to 1739, and not finding his promotion rapid enough, he entered the Austrian service. As a reward for his brilliant services the Emperor Joseph made him, in 1769, Commander-General of Moravia, and Field-Marshal in 1778. The Empress Catherine used to say: "I cannot see Admiral Tchitchakoff without thinking of a saying of the Prince de Ligne about Marshal Laudon. Some one asked him how he could be recognised: 'Go,' he replied; 'you will find him hid behind the door, ashamed of his merit and superiority.' That quite describes my admiral."

"Charles is so brave that it is a pleasure to see him. I was galloping by his side, and holding his hand, saying as formerly: 'It would be a joke if we were struck by the same shot!' After that, he carried an order to retreat to an officer, who was wounded on receiving it. Charles was delighted at having exchanged pistol shots with the enemy. M. de Laudon and I were also under fire; the first time he sees the enemy after a long period of peace he gets as excited as if he were still a mere lieutenant of Lycanians, and went himself to order Klégawiez and Pallackzi to retire from their positions, which had been turned.

"I said to him: 'Marshal, let us rather send our orderly officers and our aides-de-camp.' When I looked round there were none left; they had all gone off like giddy fellows with Charles. Pösig was taken at about twelve o'clock.

"Such is the simple story of a very pretty and amusing little affair—similar, however, to

many others that our generals make a fuss about, and the newspapers describe as serious battles, for the edification of the coffee-rooms and society of the capital."

Meanwhile Marie-Thérèse, in her ceaseless efforts to bring the war to a close, won over the Czarina to her cause, and at length succeeded in spite of the Emperor Joseph, who was ignorant of his mother's negotiations.

A Congress met at Teschen on the 10th of April 1779, and peace was signed on the 13th of May 1779. This war was peculiar in many respects. The Palatine dynasty, in whose interest the war had been undertaken, took no part in it. Bavaria, the subject of dispute, was not involved in the hostilities; and the Elector-Palatine, who had refused the King of Prussia's assistance, owed the chief advantages of the peace to his influence. The termination of this war without a single battle left everybody in a bad humour, especially the Prince de Ligne: "I was not the only one displeased," he says;

"the Empress was dissatisfied because peace had not been made soon enough; the Emperor because it was concluded without his knowledge; Marshal Lascy because his plans had been interrupted, which, if they had been carried out, would have proved far more advantageous; Marshal Laudon because he had only played the part of observer and observed; the King of Prussia because he had spent twenty-five millions of écus[1] and twenty-five thousand men, and had not once done what he intended; Prince Henry because he had been constantly crossed by the King."

[1] Equal to £6,250,000 sterling

END OF VOL. I

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